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63rd year of publication

Evaluating the worth of Alberta's Tar Sands

Hendrik Vlaar

Oil production in Alberta contributes significantly to Canada's economy. Recent studies have demonstrated that the Albertan oil sands generated $59 billion worth of investments between 1997 and 2006, with a further $80 billion projected by 2010, due to the industry's rapid expansion in the last few years. Most Canadians can appreciate the implicit economic benefits. An estimated $41 billion federal tax boost over the next ten years is good news in a recession-burdened government. During the same time, the industry promises 6.6 million "person years" of employment, 44 per cent of which will manifest outside of the province itself. These are important considerations to be made in any discussion on the Albertan oil sands, not to mention the constant supply of stable energy for all Canadians. nevermind their value in realpolitik – a stable source of energy for a growing economy

Nonetheless, environmental critics are starting to wonder if the economic benefits of the tar sands still outweigh the burden this industry puts on the environment, and – increasingly – on people. Four concerns top the list: tailing pond refuse seeping into groundwater, creating health hazards; the over-consumption of fresh water in the bitumen mining process; the destruction of boreal forests; and the ignorance of the First Nations voice regarding oil sand development. According to scientists, environmental activists, and ecumenicals alike, the rapid expansion and exploitation of oil sands projects by Canadian companies have been synonymous with the social and environmental carelessness in which they have been carried out.

Harmful side-effects

In a discussion with the Canadian government's Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development on June 9th of this year, environmental consultant James Bruce said that a lack of schematic foresight by Canadian oil companies has had serious environmental implications.

Before and after: clear-cutting is necessary to prepare the ground for open pit mining.

One of the most immediate concerns is the mobilization of arsenic materials into groundwater via the extraction of bitumen. (Bitumen is the hydrocarbonous mixture extracted at the Albertan oil sands to be further processed into usable energy.) Refinement of the bitumen creates large quantities of "tailings" that are placed in large ponds for storage and possess high levels of toxicity. While the industry claims that the tailings storage method eliminates the possibility of seepage, research initiated by the Council of Canadian Academies has proven otherwise.

A lack of foresight by Canadian oil companies has had serious environmental implications.

"The fact that there are already naphthenic acids – which are only produced through the oil sands mining [process] – in the river would suggest that the stuff isn't staying in the groundwater," says Bruce.

Only a few years into development, this toxic seepage has already begun to harm nearby populations. Residents of Fort Chipewyan, a small town in the northern region of Alberta at the tip of the Athabasca River, are suffering from increased levels of illness when compared to the rest of the country. Three years ago Alberta Health and Wellness released an analysis on the small town that showed elevated cases of Graves disease and renal failure. A subsequent study in March of 2007 showed arsenic levels in moose meat at 17-30 times the acceptable limit in terms of its contribution to cancer risk. The comments of KAIROS – a Canadian Ecumenical justice organization – put the health crisis most poignantly, saying that in Fort

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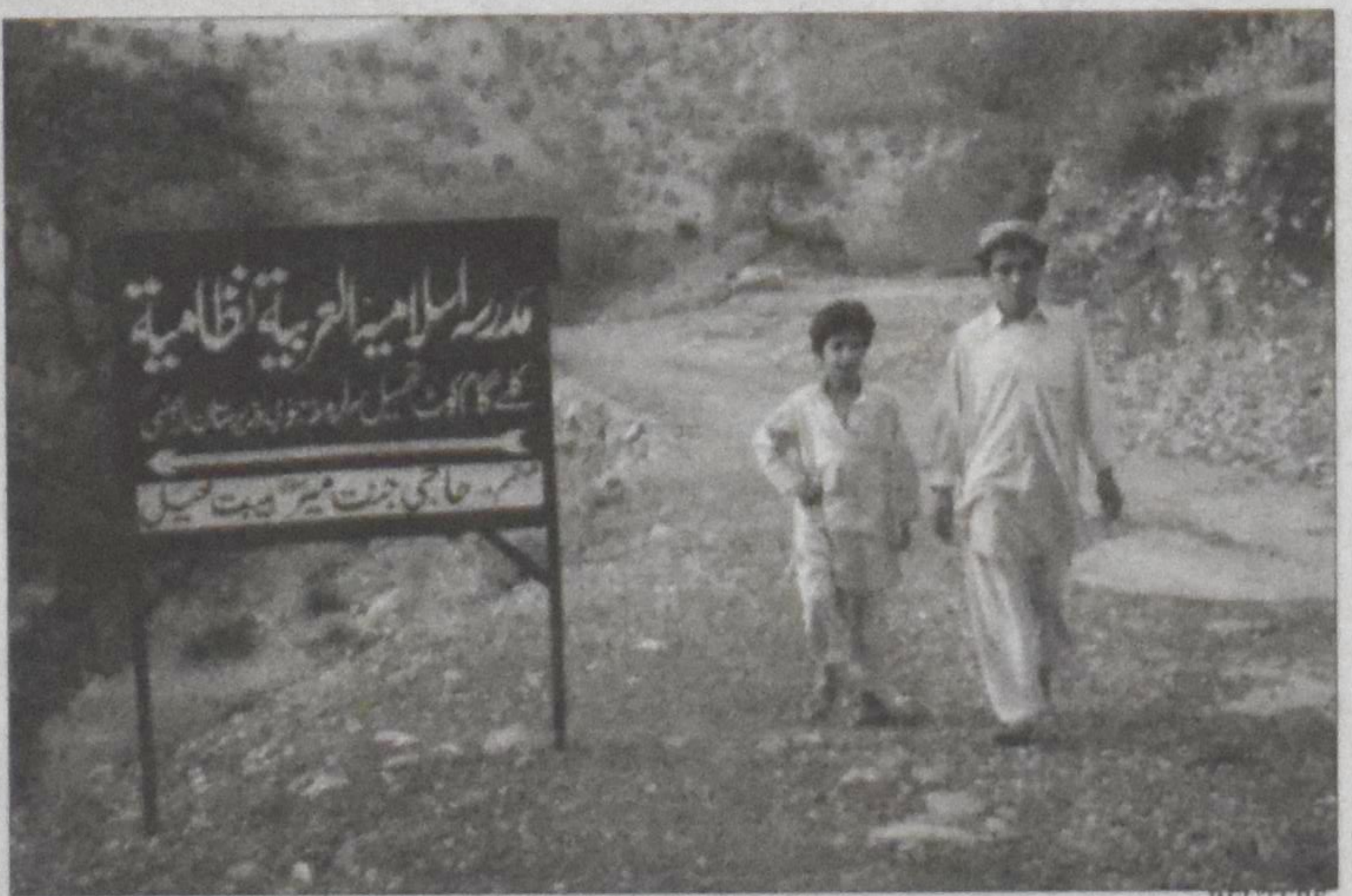
Struggling for peace in Afghanistan

Mike Hogeterp

Turmoil in Afghanistan is a troubling reality today. Shrinking humanitarian access, deteriorating security, and high rates of civilian and military casualties threaten the hopes associated with the US surge, as well as the Afghan election and Canada's efforts for stability and development.

The peoples of Afghanistan are among the most vulnerable and poverty stricken in the world. The UN department of Safety and Security reports that, as of July 2009, 42 per cent of districts are of "very high" or "extreme" risk for delivery of humanitarian aid. This risk means that essential food and medicine cannot be delivered during a crisis.

The evidence of deteriorating security comes in disturbing casualty numbers: 76 international troops, including 5 Canadians, were killed in action in July in Afghanistan. This was the highest monthly total since western involvement began in October 2001. The loss of these lives is tragic.



REUTERS

These boys are from South Waziristan, a volatile part of northwest Pakistan bordering Afghanistan.

The lives of the peoples of Afghanistan are also profoundly threatened. The UN reports a 24 per cent increase in civilian deaths in the first half of 2009 (1,013 people) over the same period last year. This rise in civilian death is occurring in the midst of a military *surge*, the insurgent response to it, and elections that the Taliban has vowed to disrupt. 59 per cent of civilian deaths were caused by insurgent actions (Taliban and others) and 31 per cent by NATO airstrikes. Regardless of who accepts responsibility, reports out of Afghanistan indicate that civilian causalities caused by international forces create significant public anger. Consequently, President Karzai has made an election promise to rewrite

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News

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Chipewyan, the "graveyard is filling up."

Besides the damage to groundwater and negative health implications, Mr. Bruce also expressed his concern regarding the depletion of surface freshwater flowing through the Athabasca. The steam injection technique currently employed to harvest bitumen deposits 75 meters or more below the earth's surface is an extremely water-intensive process, requiring two to six barrels of water for each barrel of oil produced.

Over the last decade, expansion of the oil sands projects has concurrently depleted winter flow rates in the Athabasca. They have declined by 27 per cent, which seriously endangers dependant ecological regions. "[I]t's the winter flows that are critical in protecting ecosystems in the river," Bruce told the committee on the Hill, making recent trends "worrysome." Projections regarding further expansion of the oil sands would only exacerbate the issue unless new technologies are adopted to address water take-up. "I've heard that Suncor [Energy Co.] has reduced its water demand by about 30 per cent," said Bruce. "Let's get them all doing that."

Tar sands

Another threat to the environment is the clear cutting necessary to access the surface level bitumen. Surface level mining requires scraping up to 70 meters of boreal forest, peat, and muskeg off the earth's surface. This destruction could leave a scar of up to 144,000 square kilometers – the total area of the oil sands – in the middle of Alberta. The loss of these ecosystems means not only losing valuable natural habitat, but also the natural process they contributed to the maintenance of a healthy water table, further compounding the issue.

Even worse, some might say, than the environmental impact is the overshadowing legal issue of corporate and governmental ignorance and animosity towards Aboriginal land claims. According to the Polaris Institute's Energy Program, Tar Sands Watch, "First Nations in Alberta, Saskatchewan and the Northwest Territories have claimed that traditional lands are being destroyed for tar sands exploration and extraction, and First Nations are not being included, or properly compensated, for their lost and destroyed lands and water supplies."

The Dehcho First Nation, for example, who have not yet negotiated a settlement claim with the federal government, is currently at extreme risk of losing that opportunity on account of the proposed MacKenzie Gas Project, which would fuel the oil sands operation with natural gas from the Arctic. Furthermore, a recent Canadian Defense Security and Foreign Affairs Institute (CDFAI) report strongly suggests that First Nations people are a "threat to the oil industry." Essentially, the government is fear-mongering the Canadian public into thinking that Aboriginals within the Athabasca Basin are involved in or are complicit with eco-terrorism. All of this says that the government and industry's approach towards First Nation peoples around the

Tailings pond

oil sands has been ignorant and oppressive.

Gap between policy and practice

The conservative government is currently being taken to task regarding its environmental policies and practices in the run up to the Copenhagen climate change meetings in December. According to organizations such as the David Suzuki Foundation and Equiterre, Canadian efforts at the 2008 UN Climate Conference in Poland seemed to be in the strain of obstructionism. "It's becoming increasingly clear that Canada is using the global economic downturn to justify its demand for weak intensity targets, rather than the strong science-based targets the world needs to avoid dangerous climate change," said Steven Guilbeault of Equiterre.

Christian non-profits such as KAIROS are stepping up the rhetoric when it comes to the tar sands. After a week-long visit to northern Alberta in May, a delegation from KAIROS "question[s] the pace of tar sands development and the sustainability of the tar sands industry and the communities on which it has an impact." The delegation hopes to meet with government officials this fall to "discuss the need for a sustainable energy policy for Canada." A recent Innovative Research Group study conducted for the Dominion of Canada said that 29 per cent of young people marked the environment as the most important issue in last fall's election. Whether or not there's another election this September, the viability of Alberta's tar sands deserves a long, hard look from Canadian politicians and citizens alike.

Hendrik Vlaar, a Redeemer student, is passionate about Ecological and Aboriginal Justice, as well as food and water sovereignty. To find more information on the oil sands, point your browser to www.tarsandswatch.org, or check out the free documentary, Downstream, made available at www.babelgum.com.

Afghanistan *continued from page 1*

agreements with international forces to address the matter.

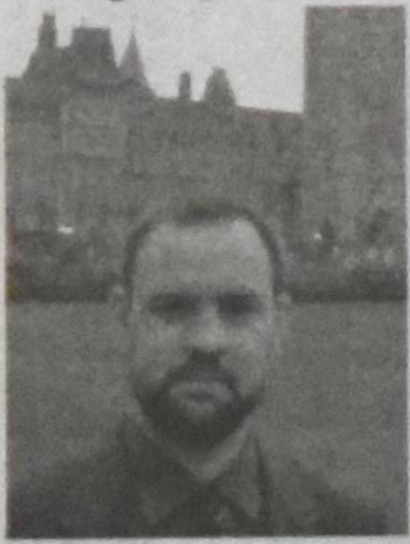
Re-evaluating our involvement

Razia Hamidi is an Afghan-Canadian and a frequent speaker on the situation in Afghanistan, and I've had the honour of sitting on a panel with her twice in the last few months. Afghans, Hamidi says, are becoming more skeptical of the benefit of international troops. According to her contacts in Afghanistan, corruption is creating a great deal of insecurity and social instability. She says that Afghans need to root out corruption and that nations like Canada can be most effective and helpful by supporting such efforts.

In the spring and summer of 2008, Canada made an explicit commitment to a balanced mission in Afghanistan intended to address a range of issues, including corruption. This commitment was made in the hopes of empowering the people of Afghanistan to take charge of their own security, development and governance.

The most recent progress report on Canada's mission priorities (released in June for the first quarter) has a special focus on governance and rule of law in Kandahar. The report is frank: "Achieving even modest progress in Afghanistan remains difficult" (4). Nevertheless, Canada has been able to contribute to some improvements, specifically in police literacy and capacity training for leaders in the justice system in Kandahar. Training like this improves the functioning of the justice system and can help reduce corruption. In addition to this governance support on the ground, Canada has provided a substantial grant to the UN Development Program's Law and Order Trust for Afghanistan.

Canada's recent steps to support rule of law in Afghanistan are part of a broader effort to integrate civilian and military elements of the mission. These official commitments to a balanced approach in Afghanistan have been received with cautious optimism by civil society organizations concerned about peacebuilding and community development. Canada, NATO nations and the government of Afghanistan all regularly acknowledge that there is not a military solution to the insurgency. There is an emerging consensus that progress on security, governance, development and reconciliation are all critical for peace and an end to the insurgency.



Mike Hogeterp works out of a love for justice as the Research and Communications manager for the Committee for Contact with the Government of the CRC in Canada.

Ecumenical advocacy efforts

The consensus for an integrated approach in Afghanistan is stimulating reflection and advocacy in parts of the Canadian church community. In early August, the Commission on Justice and Peace (CJP) of the Canadian Council of Churches wrote to the Chair person of the House of Commons Special Committee on Afghanistan. The CJP formally requested that the Committee study the implementation of Canada's priorities related to community peacebuilding, human rights and political reconciliation. Study of these matters is critical as Canada considers its role in Afghanistan post-2011 (Canada's agreed end date for its military mission). Members of the CJP will also prepare a brief on these subjects to assist the Committee deliberations. That brief will draw on the experience of Afghan Canadians like Razia Hamidi and the expertise of civil society organizations working in Afghanistan. The hope is that creative public dialogue and careful listening to the priorities of the peoples of Afghanistan will deepen Canada's efforts to build peace, even in the face of the deepening turmoil there.

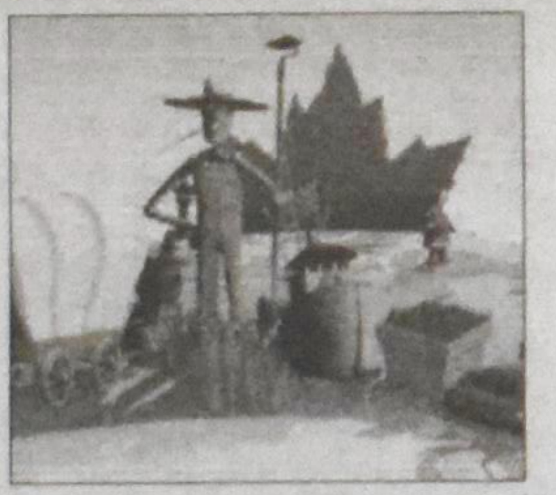
News

Equipping consumers to buy Canadian food

Nathan Stevens

The issue of food labelling is a controversial topic for farmers in Ontario. It is also a growing concern for consumers. The Competition Bureau of Canada recently published draft enforcement guidelines for Canada's new "Made in Canada" and "Product of Canada" regulations. While these guidelines do not change the rules, they do address some of the concerns that CFFO members have expressed in the past.

Farmers are divided on whether labelling in Canada ought to be a mandatory requirement, rather than voluntary, in order to provide consumers with full disclosure. Farmers that are focused on domestic production and local markets want stronger labelling laws that allow Canadian consumers to make fully informed decisions. Meanwhile, farmers that are focused on export are currently railing against what they perceive to be the stringent enforcement of United States Country of Origin Labelling laws that came into effect earlier this year.



Back in January, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency introduced new regulations for use of the voluntary claims "Product of Canada" and "Made in Canada." To use "Product of Canada," 98 percent of a product must be of Canadian origin. To use "Made in Canada," 51 percent of the material and labour costs must be Canadian in origin. In both cases, the last substantial transformation must occur in Canada.

The Competition Bureau recently published draft guidelines for discussion on how to interpret potential infringements of these regulations. Among the key points of the proposed new direction is that it is not required that someone actually be deceived by what could be false or misleading representations. There simply has to be the potential for consumers to be misled. Hopefully, this places the burden of proof firmly on those engaged in potentially misleading practices, rather than those concerned about them.

The guidelines will also look at potentially misleading implicit declarations on labels. This includes terms like "Shop Canadian," "Proudly Canadian" and "Think Canadian." It also includes potentially misleading use of the Canadian or Provincial flag symbols or the use of the Maple Leaf symbol. Many Canadian producers will be pleased if these practices are properly addressed by the new guidelines.

From my perspective, these key considerations are positive steps towards developing a labelling system in Canada that fully informs consumers of where their food comes from. While the rules stop short of requiring companies to disclose where food comes from, it identifies that there are deceptive practices out there, and in turn, equips concerned consumers with the ability to challenge misleading claims and seek truth in advertising.

Nathan Stevens is the Research and Policy Advisor for the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario. CFFO is supported by 4,350 farm families across Ontario.

Sin is our only hope

Eternal Student
Peter Schuurman

I was preparing a "confession of sin" section in a recent worship service and was struck by this thought: sin, as an idea, is elapsing. At best, it is trivialized ("sinfully delicious double dark chocolate"); at worst, the self-esteem movement has vanquished it from our vocabulary altogether. This drives home one major task for Christians in a post-Christian culture: to keep biblical language alive.

Wrong-doing today is more often than not directed at institutions: the family, the church or the media, for example. We are "co-dependant" because of our "dysfunctional family" and suffer from a "guilt complex" because of our fundamentalist upbringing. Violent youth have been poorly socialized through excess television and video game use. We are all victims of our inadequate nurturing environments.

This is all relatively legitimate. Institutions fall short. However, it's the language of personal sin and responsibility that is often missing, especially outside of the conservative church. I must admit, the deeper I move into academic circles, the less appealing the whole idea of individual sin becomes. The Reformed habit of "confession of sin" in every worship service is awkward. It's gloomy, undignified, and when invoked, can appear contrived.

Why do so many of us feel shy about sin? The answer is partly historical. Personal sin may have been over-emphasized in the past, to the point where the reality of God saying over Adam and Eve "It is very good" was over-shadowed. Can we recover the language in a helpful way?

Sin and brokenness

One idea that has helped me recover the significance of sin is the distinction between sinful rebellion and our brokenness in sin (mentioned in *Imagining Redemption* by David Kelsey). We can more easily talk about our "brokenness," as this includes evils that befall us, like disease, accidents, and our general soul wounds. In our brokenness – a medical metaphor – we are victims of the sinfulness that stains the world.

In our sinful rebellion, however, we are perpetrators. In this case, a legal metaphor is assumed, where we *victimize* ourselves, the planet, or someone else. We not only "fall short" but we "transgress" a law.

What is interesting is how easily the two understandings are interwoven: often perpetrators are victims of their circumstances, and victims often respond to their hurt in sinful ways. Just watch children. If one child pushes another child, you can almost visibly see anger, resentment or revenge light up in the victim's eyes. The same occurs with nations. Sin begets sin.

So even in reflecting on "brokenness" we can be reflecting at the same time on personal responsibility. And in talking about individual wrong-doing, we can be simultaneously talking about brokenness. Medical and legal understandings are not wholly disconnected. Both can inform our "confession of sin."

Sin versus entitlement

The challenge before us is great. In a culture of entitlement (and a culture that feels entitled to its entitlement) the language of sin is offensive. But the offense obscures a tragic loss: in jettisoning the idea of sin, we also have lost the language of debt, especially moral debts. As Margaret Atwood says in this year's Massy Lectures entitled *Payback*, debt reminds us that we owe each other something, that we owe the dying planet something, and maybe, just maybe, that is a way of saying we owe God something. It's an idea that cracks inconveniently on our hard narcissistic shell, if not now, most certainly at a later date of reckoning.

The situation is critical. Theologian Barbara Brown Taylor goes so far as to say "sin is our only hope." Her book is called *Speaking of Sin* and she insists we must not abandon the word. "Sin is our only hope," she says, "because the recognition that something is wrong is the first step toward setting it right again. There is no help for those who admit no need of help … no repair for those who insist that nothing is broken…."

"Sin" may be a four-letter word for many, but without it there can be no redemption. The story of creation, sin, and redemption must be told and re-told if we are to see ourselves aright. As Neil Plantinga says in *Not the Way It's Supposed to Be: A Breviary of Sin*, "Christianity's major doctrines need regular re-statement so that people may believe them, or believe them anew." In this light, every Sunday, and every Lord's Prayer, is not too often.

Peter Schuurman lives in Guelph, Ontario where he parents his two children, Joseph and Petra. He is also part-time faculty at Redeemer University College where he teaches World Religion.

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Guest Editorial/Editorial

The King David Defence

James C. Schaap

For the record, I wanted President Bill Clinton to resign once the famous stained blue dress became a smoking gun. I could no longer trust him. He was a bald-faced liar about a tryst he had entertained right there in the Oval Office. I thought he should go.

About South Carolina's Governor Mark Sanford, I'm not as sure. His indiscretions are coloured in a wholly different hue. While, today, his promises to his wife and his commitment to marriage are as shattered as Clinton's were, at least Sanford – give him his due – wasn't just toying with an intern. His liaison with the Argentinean may turn out to have been nothing more than a fling, but his leaked e-mails suggest that what was going on between them wasn't simply a bout of heavy – breathing. What Jenny Sanford, his wife, now faces seems to be much darker than Hillary Clinton might have: Sanford appears to love his paramour.

Clinton was a Southern Baptist, a Bible-toter, someone who showed up at church far more frequently, say, than Ronald Reagan. But this Sanford is as different from sinner Clinton as he is from the saint. He and Nevada Senator John Ensign, also disgraced by his sexual indiscretions in the last month, are members of a small and somewhat secretive Bible study they call "C Street," a ministry of an organization called The Family. I don't doubt for a moment that I share with The Family a specific theological orientation. I'm quite sure they're people I'd like and respect. Sanford, by the way, is Presbyterian.

Jan Massys - David and Bathsheba *(1562, Oil on wood)*

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Following King David

A month ago, Governor Sanford indicated he wasn't stepping down from office, and then he said this: "I have been doing a lot of soul searching on that front. What I find interesting is the story of David, and the way in which he fell mightily, he fell in very, very significant ways. But then picked up the pieces and built from there."

And later, this: "I remain committed to rebuilding the trust that has been committed to me over the next 18 months, and it is my hope that I am able to follow the example set by David in the Bible – who after his fall from grace humbly refocused on the work at hand. By doing so, I will ultimately better serve in every area of my life, and I am committed to doing so."

Now I'm all for sola scriptura, but nothing convinces me more deeply than that analogy that Governor Mark Sanford needs a leave of absence to work, full-time, on himself, his marriage, and his own mind and soul. I say this not because, historically speaking, at least, he's wrong. He isn't: King David didn't walk away from the job, even though he engineered the death of Bathsheba's loyal husband, and thus was not only an adulterer but also a murderer.

But what I can't understand is how on earth a smart man like Governor Mark Sanford, a committed Christian and an inveterate Bible study-er, actually presumes that King David's not giving up the throne is the template for his own decision-making a couple thousand years later. That's flat out bizarre. Governor Mark Sanford is not King David of Goliath fame, despite their mutual indiscretions, because South Carolina in the first decade of the 21st century is not Israel in 500 B. C. – or whatever the calendar said the night the King spotted Bathsheba in the tub.

Start here – Mark Sanford is not a king. What's more, had David run for public office, he wouldn't have received votes from his own family; in fact, his father nominated the other boys and never even considered the kid with the sheep. King David's appointment came from far, far higher up, and it was duly consecrated by the prophet Samuel, who left David's whole family slack-jawed when he chose, of all things, the little shepherd boy.

What's more, King David knew nothing about monogamy. The third chapter of First Chronicles lists eight of David's wives, several of whom were basically awards for valor or conquest. Fidelity meant something wholly different to the man God himself described as being closest to his own heart. None of his wives likely ever heard him promise faithfulness, nor could any of them have expected it.

He's human, but…

A couple of years ago, I finished a long psalm study, having written 365 meditations. It was a wonderful exercise and experience, manna – no, fillet Mignon – for the soul. The greatest lesson I learned throughout all that close reading is that the book of Scripture's great poetry holds just about every last human emotion and thus – I swear – offers us the immense blessing of knowing that no matter what we think or feel or do, no matter how low we fall or how furious we get at the Lord God almighty, we are not alone. The very humanness of the psalms seems divine.

All of that being said, Governor Mark Sanford is not King David. He may suffer as David did. His deep anguish may lead to a confession that painfully wrings the pride from his passionate heart. He may share all kinds of emotions with King David – even David's ecstatic joy in forgiveness. The Psalms may well be the book he should be reading right now.

But to not give up his governorship because King David didn't walk away from his throne is not only dumb, it's an abuse of Scripture and just plain awful theology. But then, chances are, right now, the man is horribly vexed, agonized, and confused.

If Christians weren't so bloody human, we'd offer a whole lot more convincing testimony. But we are – human, that is.

And that's a fact all of us need to remember.

Clinton, Sanford, King David, and all of us – young and old; Presidents and pensioners; men, women, and children – we all stand in need of forgiveness.

James Schaap (jschaap@dordt.edu) is an author and professor of English at Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa.

Scraping the bottom

Bert Witvoet

Maclean's, in its August 17 issue, calls Silvio Berlusconi, Italy's prime minister, "the most interesting man in the world." This spurious claim seems to be based on the fact that Berlusconi has "wealth, power, women and no end of scandals." Berlusconi's second wife says she is seeking a divorce from this "interesting" man. The final straw may have been her husband's improper relationship with an 18-year-old underwear model. At age 72, Berlusconi boasts of the fact that many women want to go to bed with him, but they are not yet aware of the fact. All this puerile behaviour apparently merits placing him on the front cover of the glossy magazine, which shows him with a smirk on his face, raising a glass of wine. Cheers!

I'm not addressing the character of this man who is rumoured to have strong Mafia connections. There are too many immoral and criminal leaders around in the world vying for the anti-Christ label that we should focus on this specimen of corruption. I'm asking myself what lives in the mind of the editors of *Maclean's* to feature someone like him for the mere reason that he is "interesting."

Vague label

What does it mean to be interesting? In the minds of the editors it probably means being different, unusual, "worthy" of our attention. It's the kind of criterion creators of reality shows use to attract audiences; it's the kind of thing that makes people rubberneck when they pass the aftermath of a car accident; it's the kind of comment that artists sometimes get whenever people don't necessarily like their artwork but feel they have to say something: "That's very interesting!" That kind of praise is usually damning.

To be interesting has no value in the marketplace of human attributes. Something or somebody who is merely interesting contributes little to life except being a spectacle for a while. I'm sure most leaders look for a more substantial legacy to leave behind. And we would like to think that most magazines try to enrich people's lives with something a little more substantial.

Other candidates

In life there are many virtues one can strive after: honesty, generosity, kindness, patience, reliability, dedication, fairness, goodness, gentleness, incorruptibility. But I have never seen "interesting" being listed among them. Come to think of it, would Iran's Mahmoud Ahmadinejad not give Berlusconi a run for his money in being the most "interesting man in the word"? Hitler was interesting, too. Amazing how much hatred he was able to spew around, and how many millions of people were tortured and killed because of his ideology. He must have been the most interesting man of the world in his day.

Hitler did serve a useful purpose, though. He became a kind of anti-hero – someone who taught us how *not* to behave. But what can we learn from the article about Signore Berlusconi? How to win a huge second majority without accomplishing anything worthwhile? Come on, *Maclean's*.

Letters/Meditations

Laborare est orare: Reflections on Labour Day

Fr. Rutler

It would seem to be a contradiction: On Labour Day people stop working. It is, though, a way of acknowledging that there is a fine human economy between work and recreation. In 2006 Pope Benedict XVI addressed the importance of "taking some time off" as an opportunity for self-reflection and getting a right perspective on the purpose of life. One of the modern encyclicals, *Laborem Exercens*, explains how work is more than a utilitarian function. To work, in whatever kind of job, is to display our dignity as having been made in the image of God. Our rational and imaginative intellect and free will can respond to the Divine Love that made the universe, and be God's agents in building civilization.

When the first man and woman had authority to "name the creatures," they were manifesting their stewardship over creation, not simply by being "at the top of the food chain" but by protecting and properly using all creatures, animate and inanimate. This perspective saves ecology from turning into idolatry of nature. St. John Chrysostom said that labour is a powerful medicine: It exercises all the strengths, physical and moral, with which we are endowed. It can be a poison if it turns in on itself and is exploited for unworthy purposes, as the sordid history of slavery and greed has shown. Then it becomes the "curse" of which the Book of Genesis speaks, but it was not originally meant as such by God. A translation of Homer's Iliad reads: "To labour is the lot of man below/ And when Jove gave us life, he gave us woe." But the true God and Father of us all sent his Son into the world as a carpenter, trained in the shop of Joseph the Carpenter, as a sign that the only labour that is a woe is labour not consecrated to God. In a 1920 letter to the American Federation of Labour, Cardinal Gibbons of Baltimore said: "I cannot conceive any thought better calculated to ease the yoke and to lighten the burden of the Christian toiler than the reflection that the highest type of Manhood has voluntarily devoted Himself to manual labour."

The Benedictine Rule requires that monks spend time in manual labour: *Laborare est orare* – to work is to pray. Even hobbies, crafts, and volunteer work are outpourings of the creative dignity of *homo faber* – man the builder.

Conversely, but not in contradiction, to pray is to work. "Liturgy" means work. The origin and conclusion of all human work is the *"Opus Dei"* or "Work of God," which is the united prayer of the Church. Sunday is not a "day off." It is the "day on" which gives focus to the rest of the week. True worship as servants of God saves us from the indignity of being slave to anyone.

Fr. Rutler, Church of Our Saviour, New York City. This piece was a blog entry at miserere.org (to have mercy), a site devoted to orthodox Catholicism.

Forgot something

Your concern about food in the July 13 issue is commendable, but in the interest of "eating local and eating well" I would think you would have included at least one article about home gardens.

Lonny Doornbos
Jordan Station, Ontario

Relationship coffee a win-win project

I appreciate your article in the July 13 issue of CC regarding Dick Nagtegaal's Relationship Coffee Company, through which he buys green coffee beans directly from the Ugandan coffee farmers. In the article Nagtegaal mentions that he has "plans to distribute coffee in Ontario this year." This is now happening. Since March of this year I've been roasting this coffee for the Renfrew-Ottawa area, and it is now gradually gaining interest. I am promoting it much the same way as Dick does, that is, to the churches.

The reason I've joined up with Dick Nagtegaal is personal, but it is also has to do with the work of my son, who worked for the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee while in Uganda. He was responsible for organizing coffee farmers into the West Nile Highlands Arabica Association. I've actually visited these farmers some years ago, not knowing then that I would be buying their coffee beans today.

I've really been sold on this project, as it is a beautiful extension of the hard work CRWRC does in the region. It provides the much needed financial resources for the farmers and their families, while providing us with a high quality product. It's a win-win situation.

If anyone is interested in participating in this project we are always looking for new support.

Just email us at relationshipcoffeeco@hotmail.com.

Frank Folkema
Renfrew, Ontario

Moments of Ministry in Chaplaincy

2 John 14:1-4

"Would you please go and talk to her?" the doctor asked the chaplain. "There is nothing more we can do for her. She hasn't much more than a month or so to live." The chaplain retreated to the hospital chapel and he prayed. Next he went to her room. She was a young woman, twenty-six years old. He introduced himself. "I know what you are going to tell me," she said. "I am going to die. Isn't that what you came to tell me?" The chaplain nodded. Her reaction really surprised him. "I am glad that there is finally someone with whom I can talk about dying," she said. "My family says that I am doing well. The doctors, and believe me there have been quite a few, say that I am holding my own, but deep in my heart I know that my time has come. Will you talk to me about dying?" He took out his pocket Bible.

"Let me first tell you what someone else said about dying." He read from the Gospel of John. "In my Father's house are many rooms – I am going there to prepare a place for you." They got into a discussion about the life hereafter which she said she looked forward to. As the chaplain was about to leave, she asked, "Will you come back?"

"As often as you want," he answered. A month or so later he preached at her funeral. "A place has been prepared for her," he proclaimed.

Prayer

Jesus, our Lord, we thank you for preparing a place for us in the Father's house. Help us to live lives worthy of being guests in that house.

Carl Tuyl (ctuyl@rogers.com) *is a retired CRC minister living in Toronto.*

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News

Post-election violence perpetrators likely to face ICC

Kariuki Wangai

Those responsible for the politically-motivated violence that swept Kenya following the disputed presidential poll results of the December 2007 General Elections may be headed for trial at the International Criminal Court at the Hague, Netherlands.

Over 1,300 people died while thousands others were injured or displaced in the intense fighting that followed the announcement that the incumbent, Mwai Kibaki, had beaten opposition leader Raila Odinga by a mere 300 votes in a poll marred by claims of irregularities and outright deceit. The opposition dismissed both the results and the president's hurried swearing-in. What followed was an orgy reminiscent of the Rwanda genocide of the early 90s: destruction, maiming, rape and murder along ethnic lines.

It was only through the efforts of a Panel of Eminent Personalities led by immediate former United Nations secretary general Kofi Annan that some peace was restored and a Government of National Unity cobbled together, with Mwai Kibaki retaining the presidency but sharing power with opposition leader Raila Odinga as Prime Minister.

Informed by the pattern of election-related violence in some pockets of the country that showed a five-year cycle coinciding with General Elections, the Panel of Eminent Personalities sought a lasting solution by setting up two commissions, one to probe the 2007 polls and the other to look into the causes of the post-poll violence. The former, led by retired South African judge Johanne Kreigler, established that there had been massive irregularities in the polls, including vote-buying and stuffing of ballot boxes on both sides of the contestants. Consequently, the commission reached the verdict that it was impossible to "tell who had won or lost." But it is the latter, led by local judge Phillip Waki and including investigators drawn from other parts of the world, that implicated politicians and other public figures for being the main instigators of the post-poll violence.

Pres. Kibaki

Prime Min Odinga

Rt. Rev. Karanja

Miscarriage of justice

The Justice Phillip Waki Commission singled out impunity as the most serious threat to national peace, noting that perpetrators of sporadic violence in past elections, albeit on a smaller scale, had been allowed to go scot-free. It singled out persons it suspected to have instigated and financed the violence and handed their names in a sealed envelope to the Panel of Eminent Persons.

Among the recommendations of the Waki Commission was the setting up of a local tribunal to try suspected perpetrators, alongside far-reaching reforms to Kenya's judiciary and police force, both institutions that have been accused of bending to political whims and abetting impunity.

The international community, through the Panel of Eminent Personalities, suggested that the Kenya government establish a Special Tribunal in place by August in readiness for the trials. If Kenya's leaders did take action, the International Criminal Court would be invited in.

Most Kenyans, tired of a political elite that has manipulated institutions to serve its ends, see the Hague option as a welcome relief. In an opinion poll conducted in April 2009, an overwhelming 94 per cent thought that the chief perpetrators of the violence should be tried by the International Criminal Court.

Now Kofi Annan has handed over the so-called "Waki envelope" to the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Mr. Moreno-Ocampo, accusing the Kenya Government of pussyfooting on ending impunity. None of the reforms suggested by the Waki Commission have been implemented.

"The Hague is the best option if impunity is to end," says the secretary-general of the National Council of Christian Churches of Kenya (NCCK), the Rt. Rev. Peter Karanja.

Kariuki Wangai (kigoto07@yahoo.com) is a freelance writer and publishing professional currently serving as publishing manager at Phoenix Publishers Ltd based in Nairobi, Kenya, East Africa, and a freelance writer. He also runs a voluntary organization, Africa Water and Sanitation, which looks at water and sanitation challenges among the poor.

Signs

"Whatsa-matter? Can't ya read the signs?"

I grew up thinking that Mrs. K's name was really "whatsa-matter-can't-ya-read-the-signs" because she had once screamed at my dad and uncle as they were walking through the K's small cornfield while pheasant hunting. The sign in question said, "No Trespassing." Apparently my dad and uncle had missed the sign, but there was no missing Mrs. K's voice. There is a theory that Gabriel wanted her voice to accompany the last trump. If so, he knew voices: Mrs. K.'s voice could send people cowering beneath mountains; it could presumably wake the dead.

My signs are not always effective, and my voice could not wake the dead, although I've been told it sometimes bores people to death. Recently, we put two electrified wires across our driveway which functions also as a farm lane. Each night we plugged in the electric charger. These signs were to deter a neighbour's cows, should they get out, from wandering the lane, trampling our yard, putting deposits on our flowerbeds, and devouring our garden. I suppose you could say they were havoc-preventers.

We put flagging tape on the wires as visual deterrents, and white wooden signs beneath the wires saying, "Power on" and "Watch out! Wire." It isn't that cows from Quick, B.C., can read. But men driving tractors and neighbours driving quads might miss the wire and give a death-wail if they managed to garrotte themselves.

The signs didn't work too well. At about 11:45 p.m. one summer's evening I heard a quad headed into our driveway. Quads – motorized four-wheeled toys specifically designed to allow human access where none is wanted or needed – apparently come with amplifiers to their engines instead of mufflers. I heard the quad enter the driveway, begin its roar down the driveway and then a scream (one that could wake me, if not the dead): "Stop! %?$!" It was another neighbour looking for wayward horses. At the last moment she spotted the sign, the flagging tape, and the wire and reacted appropriately with brakes and inappropriately with a ghastly scream. (In case you're wondering, the horses had reached the wire a few minutes earlier, read the sign, seen the flagging tape, got a shock from the wire, and beat a hasty retreat.)

At the other end of the driveway the warning sign faced the field. The wire was to protect us from cows (and horses, I suppose) that wandered in from half a mile away. The "Watch Out! Wire" sign faced the field to protect ubiquitous iniquitous quad drivers from garrotting themselves should they decide to take a peaceful high-decibel moonlit ride.

That sign lasted only a couple days. Some visitors – in broad daylight – entered our driveway (the first wire was disconnected because it was broad daylight and no animals in sight), drove to the second wire, disconnected it and proceeded to drive right over the 8" X 25" sign.

I repaired things but am not optimistic about the efficacy of warning signs anymore, at least as they elicit responses from human beings.

*****

If I understand correctly, the healings Jesus Christ performed are

actually called signs in the New Testament, not miracles. When Jesus healed the sick, fed the five thousand, cast out a demon, or raised the dead, the observers seem to have seen a magician, a wonder-working rabbi, a miracle-worker, or an entertainer of sorts.

But he was a sign-maker, in my opinion. Jesus pointed to the Kingdom, to God, to himself as the Messiah. "Look around you," Jesus said to John's disciples who were sent to ask if Jesus were the Chosen One or if the imprisoned John had to await another. "Look around you: whatsa-matter, can't you read the signs?" our Lord replied.

*****

Thunder and lightning is rather rare in our area of British Columbia. When our children were small we taught them that thunder was really "God talking." It became something of a catechism: "Thunder!" yelled one. "No, God talking," came three other voices.

Our teaching was meant well, but left the real question unanswered: "What is God saying?" I'm quite sure that "God is very powerful" is quite often the answer that comes to mind. Or perhaps, "Watch out: you could die at any time!" Or simply, "Repent." Or, "Show holy fear" (cf. Psalm 19).

What if, however, the answer is this: "I'm fixing nitrogen through lightning so that your crops get a fertilizer boost along with the rain. It's because I love you."

What do the beautiful orange fields of hawkweed tell us? That God is creator of all beauty? To be trustful, not anxious (cf. Matthew 6:28-29)? Or is God telling us that scourges of pasture weeds come because of human activities in his good world? To regard weeds as enemies use this formula: picloram + 2,4,D = bye-bye hawkweed.

What do the scourges of the emerald ash borer, Dutch elm disease, gypsy moths, "Canada" (actually "Russian") thistles; invaders like the sea lamprey, zebra mussels, and gobies … what do these teach us? To what do they point?

It is relatively easy to say that science has it only partly right when it explains lightning and thunder in terms of static electricity, but that the real explanation is "God speaking."

The world, as I see it, is full of God's glory, and is true revelation. Some charismatic Christians seem to be able to interpret news events quite easily; others get prophetic messages. I am more interested in knowing what the wind is saying as it soothes, scares, cools, desiccates, destroys, invigorates.

"Whatsa-matter" with me?" I can't read the signs very well at all.

Curt Gesch (curtgesch@hotmail.com) lives on a farm somewhere in North America, where he cowers in fear of all the quad-owners he has offended.

News

China relishes Olympics legacy

Beijing enjoys a better subway system and air quality thanks to the 2008 Games. National pride has flourished. But the political openness promised last year has not.

Simon Montlake

BEIJING – Up close, the National Stadium shows sign of disrepair, its steel struts streaked with dirt and dents. Its soaring gray lattice frame bleeds into the gray smog.

For Yang Hongying and hundreds of other Chinese tourists streaming inside, though, the Olympics stadium is a symbol of national pride. "It looks fabulous. I saw it on TV last year and now I'm seeing the real thing," she says, clutching a 3-D jigsaw of the stadium that she just bought for her son.

One year after Beijing hosted the Summer Games, its impact can be seen in the city's sporting venues, shiny new infrastructure, and improved air quality, notwithstanding the latest smog. As the world watched, China radiated efficiency, sportsmanship, and pluck, on and off the field.

But any hopes that the Beijing Olympics would spur more political openness, as members of the Olympics movement had claimed, were short-lived. In the run-up, China tightened its grip on domestic criticism and lashed out at the world for "meddling" in Tibet during an ill-fated international torch relay. Since then, there have been more clampdowns.

Far from easing China into a world of human rights and obligations, the Olympics may have had the opposite effect. Its Communist leaders used the reflected glory to tighten their grip and hammer home a message of unflinching national superiority, says Russell Moses, a political analyst in Beijing.

"Beijing made it plain. This wasn't China coming out to the world. This was the world coming round to China," he says.

Beijing boasts 246 'blue-sky days'

In a blaze of publicity to mark the anniversary, government officials have highlighted the environmental legacy of the Games. These include a fleet of 4,000 natural-gas buses, a vastly expanded subway system, and new forests around the capital. Polluting factories have been relocated, while rotating curbs on private car usage adopted during the Olympics in order to improve air quality have been prolonged.

Indeed, Beijing's air has never been cleaner, according to official data. Last year, 246 days were classified as blue-sky, though monitoring by the US embassy has given a grimier picture.

Nonetheless, most residents say air pollution has eased and that public transport is an increasingly popular way to get around the city.

Equally tangible, perhaps, are gains in what China's leaders call "spiritual civilization" – politeness, lining up for buses, not spitting in public. Beijing residents were ordered to shed such habits before the Games so as not to offend foreign visitors. Surveys quantified progress using a "good behavior index" that trended upwards.

Event still evokes national pride

Like many host cities, Beijing faces the challenge of putting Olympics venues to good use. Several are due to be knocked down and rebuilt, while an artificial beach for volleyball has been reopened for public use.

The 91,000-capacity National Stadium has staged a handful of concerts over the past year and hosted an Italian soccer match on Saturday. Most days, it sees a steady flow of tourists who pay $7 to stroll around the track and shop for official souvenirs that include a palm-sized square of grass from the field – yours for $15.

For the family of Zhou Shibo, a fifth-grader, the stadium was the first stop on a city tour. He said holding the Olympics had enabled China to develop faster. "I'm very proud that this stadium was built by Chinese people," he says.

Other tourists offered similar praise, echoing the relentlessly upbeat tone in China's tightly controlled media. Many said the Olympics had allowed the world to see a new China and that foreigners had come away impressed.

Only Zhang Jianhua, an entrepreneur from the port city of Dalian, appeared nonplussed, as he gazed around the vast stadium where two giant screens showed highlights from the Games. "As a Chinese citizen, I feel a little uncomfortable. It was a good Olympics. But we spent too much money," he says.

ALEXANDER F. YUAN/AP

People cheered after a mass tai chi performance outside Beijing's National Stadium to mark the one-year anniversary of China hosting the Olympics.

For press freedom, mixed results

In the run-up to the Games, under pressure from Olympics officials, China eased its rules on the movements of foreign media. It has since extended these freedoms, though foreign reporters continue to face intimidation and are barred from travelling freely to Tibet and, since the recent violence, Xinjiang.

"The Olympics is a case study of enormous lost opportunities, especially in talking to people here in China about the outside world. It was a one-way conversation," says Mr. Moses.

Simon Montlake is a correspondent for the Christian Science Monitor.

From the Lab

Rudy Eikelboom

I have dyslexia

I am reasonably bright: to be a neuroscientist requires some intelligence. But I can't spell, and many other language tasks are much more difficult for me than they are for most people. My issues with language received little formal attention when I was a kid, and I was never officially tested; but today I would probably be diagnosed as having developmental dyslexia.

This disorder sends tentacles down into all my work and writing. On my primary-school spelling tests, for which I had to learn 20 words each week, I would routinely make 17 to 19 mistakes. In spelling bees I kept score; no students wanted me on their team. To this day I cannot easily pronounce unusual words and names. If you say a "difficult" name or word to me, I can repeat it, but the pronunciation does not "stick": a few seconds later it is gone. I warn my students not to trust the way I pronounce scientific terms and researchers' names. When I submit a research paper for journal publication, the reviewers usually comment that the paper should have been more carefully edited.

Dyslexia is a neurological disorder of reading and associated tasks in which people's written skills do not match their apparent intelligence. Although scientists do not know as much about this disorder as they would like, they do know that the brains of dyslexic and non-dyslexic individuals work differently. At the heart of this disorder there seems to be a phonological (word/sound) problem. For example, whereas most people learn to read by sounding out words, it appears that people with dyslexia learn written language by memorizing words. In Japanese there are two written languages: one, like English, built on combining symbols like letters; and a second, like Chinese, where words have individual symbols that have to be memorized. People with dyslexia have fewer problems learning the individual symbol language than they do the letter language.

My teachers tried many strategies to help me learn: from the painful (copy each word spelt wrong 100 times) to the annoying (copy each misspelled word 50 times) to the helpful (attend a special class to help me to make the appropriate letter-sound connections). No strategy really helped. Even now, to learn unusual words, I have to try explicitly to memorize them, and it often does not work.

Positive outcomes

Having dyslexia has had two consequences for me as a Christian neuroscientist. One is that I have to acknowledge in a very real way whenever I start to write that my work is dependent on my Lord's grace. It also means that I am dependent on others to help me with writing. The columns you have read in *Christian Courier* are first sent to Cara DeHaan, a graduate student in English at University of Waterloo and a member of my church. Her ability to take the mismatched skeleton I provide and turn it into more readable text is what makes a column like this possible. All writers are aware of how difficult it is to write clearly and report a dependence on their editors. In my case the text sometimes gets a complete rebuilding, and no sentence is left untouched. I really appreciate it and want to thank Cara for this help. Working in a Christian community where we try to support each other in our weaknesses is part of the joy of our lives in Christ.

Second, I enjoy my university work and think it important to tell you that if you or someone you know is also struggling with a problem like this, I am proof that this disorder is NOT academically fatal. People who have dyslexia are like those who have an illness or medical problem that controls and limits how they act. Dyslexia is something that can be compensated for: my spelling checker is always on. Having this disorder does not mean that there may not be other above-normal abilities; in my case my mathematical skills are very good. I am also told that I can speak well. It is interesting that writing and speaking are skills that can be disconnected in this way.

At this point we have only hints of how to help children with dyslexia. For some of them, language and phonics training seem to help; for most, dyslexia will be an issue all their lives. If you have dyslexia, as I appear to, recognize that you can still do many, many things and get the support that our community can provide.

Rudy Eikelboom (reikelboom@wlu.ca) is associate professor of psychology at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario

Education

Solar water heating project underway at Dordt College

SIOUX CENTER, Iowa (DC) – The engineering department at Dordt College is getting itself into hot water – literally.

After receiving an Iowa Energy Center grant of $7,500 this spring, by early August engineering professor Kevin Timmer and two students had nearly completed the process of installing a solar assisted hot water system for both educational and practical use in Dordt's Center for Science and Technology.

The project's main objective is to demonstrate to area homeowners and plumbing contractors the environmental and economic benefits of a solar water-heating system. The project will also encourage the stewardly use of energy resources. In the process, Dordt's engineering students are getting hands-on experience in thermodynamics, heat transfer and solar-energy engineering. The project will be demonstrated each semester to students in Dr. Timmer's "Energy, Materials and the Environment" class.

Two flat plate solar collectors have been installed atop Dordt's science building. They are connected to a thermal storage tank, circulation pump and controls. The system's computer-linked instruments will log temperatures, flow rate and power requirements so that thermal energy "harvested" can be computed. After two semesters of performance monitoring, a public demonstration will be given on Dordt's campus next May 1.

Positive environmental impact

Dr. Timmer says he became interested in solar energy when he himself was a Dordt student. After graduating he completed a master's degree in mechanical engineering then taught engineering at Dordt for nine years. At that point he took a job at an area manufacturing company. But after six years of consulting and designing equipment in the HVAC industry, Timmer resumed teaching at Dordt in 2003. He has since earned his doctorate in mechanical engineering and bio-renewable resources and technology.

"Solar assisted domestic hot water systems are claimed to be economically viable as far north as Minnesota, but few have been installed in northwest Iowa," says Timmer. "This project is not cutting edge or new technology, but it's a means of demonstrating to people how solar energy functions, the economics [of it], and how we can make a positive environmental impact."

Students will do a carbon analysis and an economic analysis to compare the installed and operating costs of the solar system compared to traditional hot water sources (electric, natural gas and propane). Dordt's rooftop pyrometers will be used to calculate the thermal efficiency of the system by comparing the amount of sunlight available each day with the amount of hot water generated.

"As a department we're trying to establish the habit of service to community," says Timmer. "It has a positive impact on attitudes and really enhances classes. Students also get a sense of what it takes to design a project, order the parts and carry through to completion." There are also some life lessons, he says with a smile, such as how much longer it takes to complete a project than what you thought it would.

Full-time summer assistants helping Timmer are senior engineering majors Danielle Kelderman from Harrisburg, South Dakota, and Andrew Tacoma from Falmouth, Michigan. Grant funding covers the stipend the students receive for their work, while Dordt is covering the cost of the equipment being installed.

Installing copper tubing for Dordt's solar assisted hot water system are Andrew Tacoma (above collectors) and engineering professor Dr. Kevin Timmer (in front of the uncovered collector). At the far left is a pyrometer, used to measure solar energy.

Rural and religious words cut from kids' dictionary

Marian Van Til

OXFORD, UK – Oxford University Press has removed words like "aisle," "bishop," "chapel," "empire" and "monarch" from its 10,000-word *Junior Dictionary* and replaced them with words like "blog," "broadband" and "celebrity," *The Telegraph* has reported. Dozens of words related to the countryside have also been culled.

The publisher says the changes were made to reflect the fact that Britain is a modern, multicultural, multi-faith society. But academics and head teachers say that the changes to the dictionary (for ages 7 and up) could have negative consequences.

"We have a certain Christian narrative which has given meaning to us over the last 2,000 years. To say it is all relative and replaceable is questionable," said Professor Alan Smithers, the director of the Centre for Education and Employment at Buckingham University. "The word selections are a very interesting reflection of the way childhood is going, moving away from our spiritual background and the natural world and towards the world that information technology creates for us."

Lisa Saunders, a worried mother, has painstakingly compared entries from the junior dictionaries from 1978, 1995, 2000, 2002, 2003 and 2007. She is "horrified" by the vast number of words that have been removed, most since 2003. "The Christian faith still has a strong following," she said – and Christianity is still officially the state-supported religion. "To eradicate so many words associated with Christianity will have a big effect on the numerous primary schools who use it."

Wholesale culling?

Saunders realized words were being removed when she was helping her son with his homework and discovered that "moss" and "fern," which were in editions up until 2003, were no longer listed.

"I decided to take a closer look and compare the new version to the other editions," said the mother of four from Northern Ireland. "I was completely horrified by the vast number of words which have been removed. We know that language moves on and we can't be fuddy-duddy about it, but you don't cull hundreds of important words in order to get in a different set of words."

Anthony Seldon, master of the leading Berkshire private school, Wellington College, said, "I am stunned that words like 'saint,' 'buttercup,' 'heather' and 'sycamore' have all gone, and I grieve it. I think as well as being descriptive, the *Oxford Junior Dictionary* has to be prescriptive too, suggesting not just words that are used but words that should be used. It has a duty to keep these words within usage, not merely pander to an audience."

Oxford University Press says it selects words with the aid of the Children's Corpus, a list of 50 million English words in general use, words from children's books and terms related to the school curriculum. Lexicographers consider word frequency when making additions and deletions.

An Oxford Press spokesperson said, "When you look back at older versions of dictionaries, there were lots of examples of flowers, for instance. That was because many children lived in semi-rural environments and saw seasons. Nowadays, the environment has changed. We are also much more multicultural. People don't go to church as often as before. Our understanding of religion is within multi-culturalism, which is why some words such as 'Pentecost' or 'Whitsun' would have been in 20 years ago but not now."

Westminster Abbey is one of Britain's most famous landmarks, but the word "abbey" has been removed from the Oxford Junior Dictionary.

Postmodernism, not science, affects undergrads' faith

ANN ARBOR, Mich. (Christian Post) – Recent research on the impact of a post-secondary student's major area of study on his or her religiosity has concluded that Postmodernism, rather than science, is the greatest antagonist of religiosity.

Researchers at the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor drew the conclusion after finding that majoring in the humanities or social sciences has a significant negative effect on both worship-service attendance and on the self-assessed importance of religion in a student's life.

"Because we consider both the humanities and many of the social sciences particularly strongly imbued with Postmodernism, we take this as evidence for a negative effect of Postmodernism on religiosity," says the study, released last month.

Perhaps surprising to many, majoring in the biological or physical sciences has a much smaller negative effect, or no effect, on religiosity. "[We] speculate that Postmodernism has a much bigger negative effect on religiosity than science does because the key ideas of Postmodernism are newer than the key scientific ideas that challenge religion. Religions have had 150 years to develop resistance or tolerance for the ideas of evolution, for example," said economist Miles Kimball, who co-authored the study.

The study defined Postmodernism as a commitment to relativism and to the idea that truth and morality are not absolute but are determined by those who are powerful. It is associated with "epistemological doubt," the idea that knowledge and certainty are extremely difficult to attain. This conflicts with religious beliefs that hold that the existence of absolute knowledge, truth and authority are rooted in God's revelation and teachings to human beings.

Continued on next page

CRC Foundation launches new website

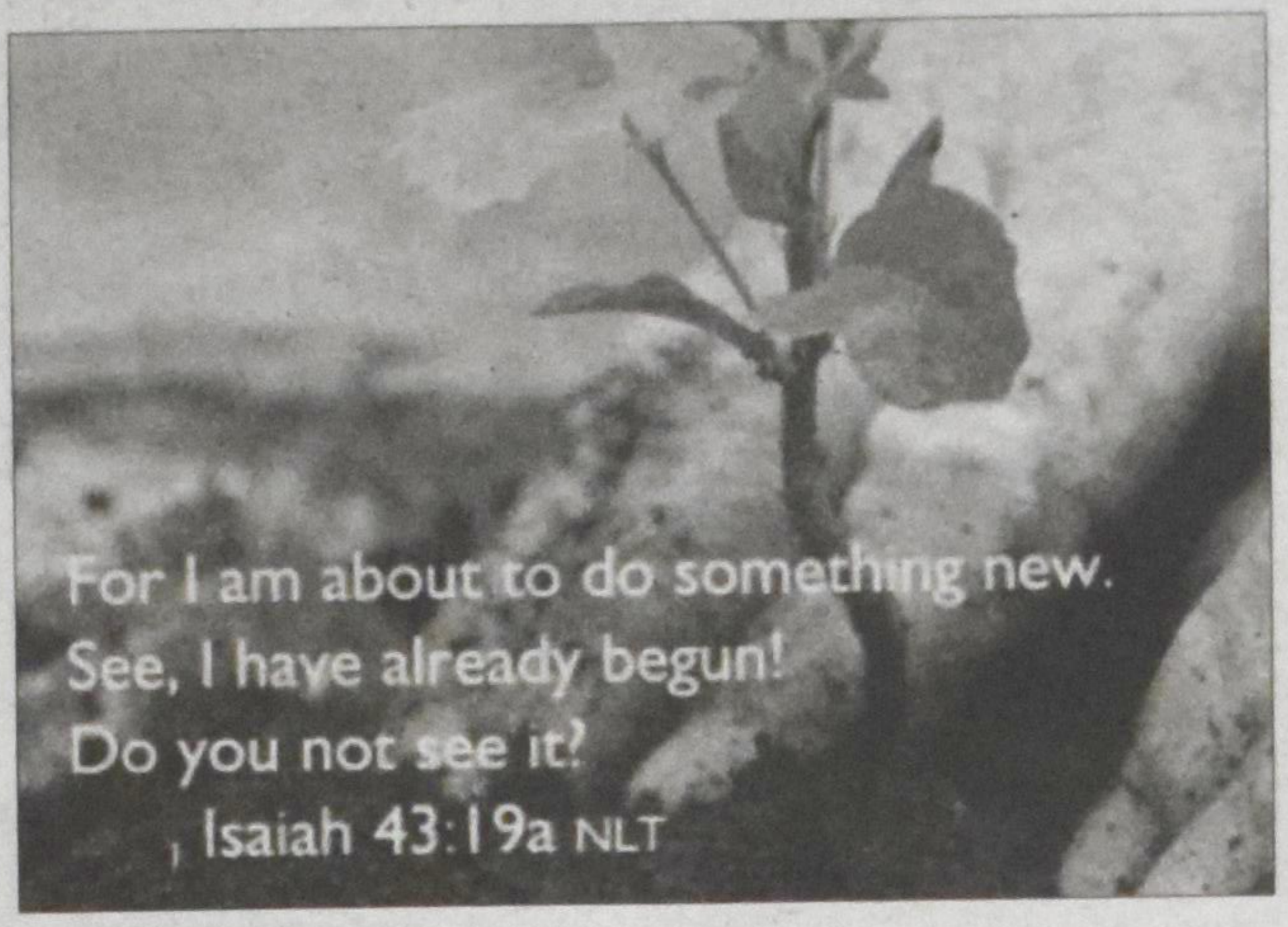
GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (CRCNA) – The Christian Reformed Church Foundation has launched its new web site, which includes descriptions of the mission, history and current projects of the foundation.

According to the new site, the foundation "works on behalf of the denomination to fund priorities and keep the church focused on its mission." It is currently raising funds to support healthy congregations and to launch the new Leadership Exchange, which will use various means, including retreats and online conversations, to "connect and energize leaders and followers to work together in healthy ways."

The Foundation is also working to raise resources to help launch The Network: Connecting Churches to Ministry. The network will advocate for what congregations say they need to do their job and to perform their various ministries more effectively.

Most recently, the Foundation was instrumental in awarding grants – money raised by last year's CRC-sponsored Sea-to-Sea bicycle tour – to churches and communities with programs that fight and work to alleviate poverty.

Director of advancement for the CRCNA Peter Harkema says, "Launching the new web site may not seem like a major accomplishment, but it does represent a significant step in communicating the mission and current intent of the foundation. We've spent the last year listening to current and former foundation board members (and to many others) to determine what the thrust of the work should be. The information in the website represents the outcome of these discussions."



The website uses the image of a slender, multi-colored leaf as a symbol of new growth, in order to remind people that together "we worship the same God who is making all things new. That's why, as a denomination, our goal is to be God's instrument in transforming lives and communities worldwide," says Harkema.

You can check out the new site at crcna.org/pages/foundation_index.cfm.

EU directive may dictate faith matters

LONDON (The Christian Institute) – Britain's Roman Catholic leaders are calling a proposed European Union "Equal Treatment Directive" an "instrument of oppression." The bishops are concerned that the directive could limit freedom of religion and freedom of expression.

The bishops warn that if the directive were implemented "the EU would effectively be dictating to religious bodies what their faith does or does not require: a wholly unacceptable position." The Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, and the Bishops' Conference of Scotland, made the comments in a joint response to a UK government consultation on the proposed directive.

Peter Smith, Archbishop of Cardiff (Wales), cited "serious concerns about possible unintended consequences which could have the effect of limiting the right of the church and its members to act in accordance with Catholic belief." The directive proposes a framework of anti-discrimination law that all European member states would have to put into practice through laws in their own countries.

The bishops warned that the directive does not balance the competing rights of different groups. "Practical implementation may effectively turn the directive into an instrument of oppression against one or other group" because the directive's harassment provisions are "entirely subjective." They added, "Various pressure groups are likely to use the provisions to curtail the expression of views they disagree with by the simple expedient of declaring themselves to be offended." For example, campaigners for same-sex marriage may say they are offended by presentations of the Roman Catholic Church's moral teaching on homosexual acts; or an atheist may claim to be offended by religious pictures in an art gallery.

The bishops concluded, "What the church is seeking from this directive is simply the right to maintain its own teaching and activities with integrity, according to its own ethos."

Ontario bishop, parishioners respond to gay man's complaint

PETERBOROUGH, Ont. (Catholic Culture) – Bishop Nicola de Angelis of Peterborough, Ontario, and 12 parishioners of St. Michael's Roman Catholic Church have filed a response to a claim lodged with the Ontario Human Rights Commission that the removal of a gay altar server was an act of illegal discrimination. Bishop de Angelis and the church members explained the church's response. It argues that the issue was "not a human rights problem but a church matter."

The priest of the church, Fr. Allan Hood, had encouraged both Jim Corcoran of Grafton, Ont., and the man Corcoran calls his "life partner" to take the training necessary to become altar servers. But the parishioners who lodged the complaint, along with their diocesan bishop, say the priest's action goes against what the Roman Catholic Church teaches about homosexuality.

Corcoran, however, says the parishioners have a "vendetta" against Fr. Hood. Corcoran was removed as an altar server in April. He says that was because of his sexual orientation and contends that he lives chastely with his homosexual partner.

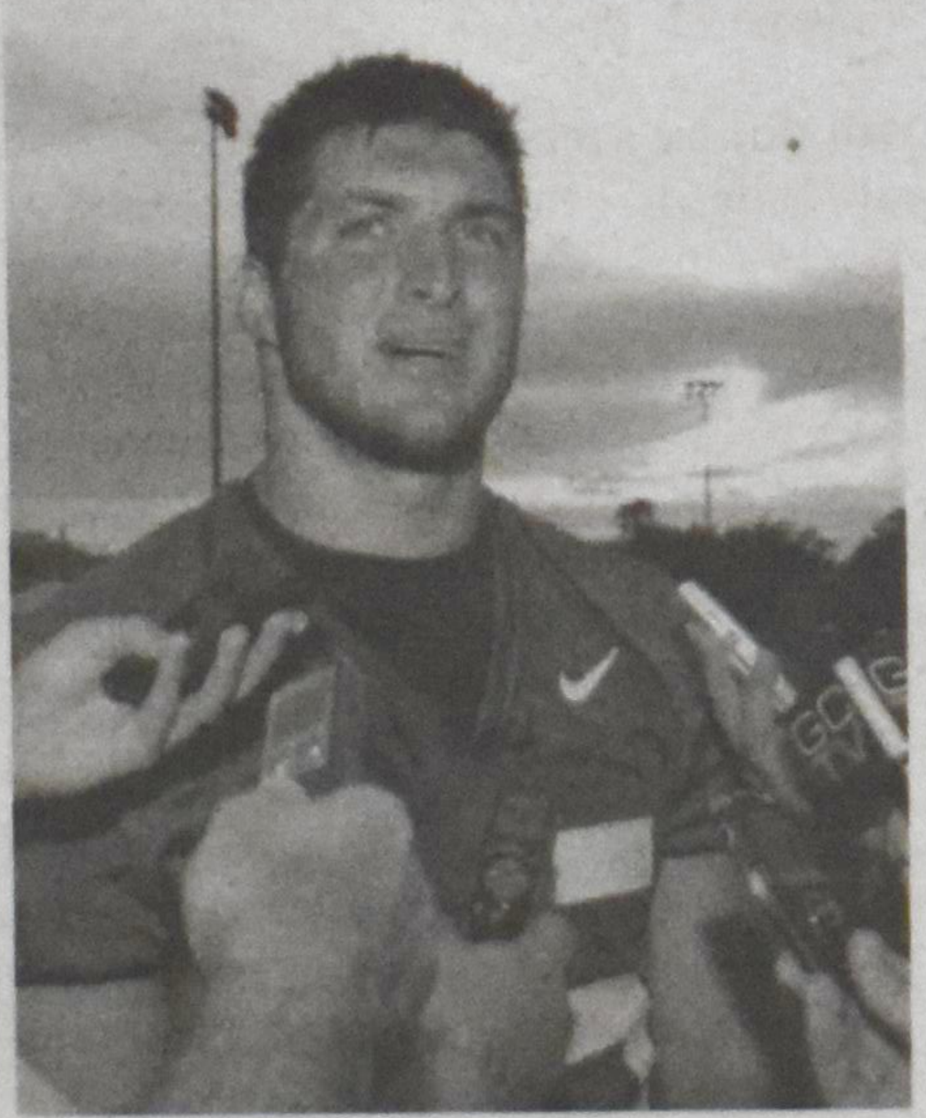
He is seeking financial damages – $20,000 from each of the 12 parishioners and $25,000 from the Diocese of Peterborough for legal fees – and the restoration of his role as altar server. He also wants the bishop to preach a sermon on the "consequences of practicing discrimination and the slanderous spreading of rumors, hate, and innuendo."

Postmodernism *continued*

The study was based on data collected by researchers at the University of Michigan since 1975. Each year 16,000 students in approximately 130 public and private high schools across the U.S. were interviewed during their last year of high school and a randomly-selected sample from each senior class was followed up bi-annually after high school.

Researchers set out to examine how exposure to specific contents of a curriculum affects students' values. They determined that students who entered the humanities were highly religious but after finishing that area of study were less religious than they started. Those who switched into the social sciences were on average less religious and maintained or strengthened their already low religiosity. Surprisingly, majoring in education was found to increase religiosity both in terms of religious attendance and importance; and so did the study of business.

Christian football star admits 'saving himself for marriage'



HOOVER, Ala. (CNA) – Heisman Trophy-winning quarterback Tim Tebow brought the unlikely combined subjects of chastity and college sports together at a press conference recently when asked by a reporter at the U.S. college football's SEC Media Days if he was "saving himself for marriage."

The question brought laughter from media members – and from Tebow himself. But Tebow's answer also elicited eyebrow-raised surprise. "Yes, I am," Tebow said. Noting reporters' reactions he smiled. "I think y'all were stunned by that… first time ever! Wow…." He added, "I was prepared for that question, I don't think y'all were."

More to the story

In other remarks at the conference, he discussed how the story of his birth and how his mother resisted doctors' pressure to abort him has affected others. His parents were Christian missionaries in the Philippines. His mother contracted a life-threatening infection while pregnant with him but refused medical advice to abort the unborn Tim Tebow.

At the press conference, the football star said he believes the publicity his mother's story has received has helped other women decide not to abort their children. "There have been a lot of people that have been encouraged not to have an abortion because they heard the story of my mom, or they have been encouraged because they have heard me give my faith on TV or in a report or something," he said.

If there is a backlash against what he says about his faith, Tebow says, "I will deal with it if I have to. It's not a big deal to me because of the kids and people that have been encouraged by the stories we have tried to tell and by the life that I've tried to live."

Tebow is the first home-schooled athlete to win the Heisman Trophy.

Society

Collapsitarians

Bert Hielema

Collapsitarians: I bet you've never heard that word before. I saw it for the first time on the *Mother Jones* web site. The word collapsitarians speaks for itself: they are people who look forward to a total economic downfall and universal joblessness. They'd like to see the already fragile sectors of America's recession-plagued economy – finance, real estate, and now the commercial segment as well – totally disintegrate, so that something new, brighter and more durable might appear.

These old ways, they contend, will self-destruct because of fundamental flaws that will foster total failure in the near future. They fully realize that we humans are unique in having the ability to learn from the experience of others, and that we are also remarkable for our apparent disinclination to do so. And so they are convinced that we will self-destruct.

Tear it down!

What these people hope – with utopian fervor, I may add – is that shoring up ailing economies and Wall Street with bailouts and stimulus plans will prove totally futile, and on the ashes of the 20th Century ruins they expect to see arise a new economy, more geared to renewable energy and a simpler life style with less pressure and more freedom. This "they" includes Luddites, those who see technology as a curse; Anarchists – those who see government as the problem; Survivalists – those who have already reserved a place in the country, well stocked with food; the Green types – those who see collapse as something that is bound to happen; as well as those who do not agree with the widespread American tendency to regard their country as "a city on the hill, God's chosen race." Even financial-sector employees are among those who just want it all over with.

These people – not an inconsiderable number – want collapse to come, and even nudge it along. "If you see Humpty Dumpty sitting on a wall, go ahead and give him a good shove," one advocate said: "Once all the rotten and fragile stuff falls to pieces, hardier and healthier and more reasonable ways of organizing experience will emerge. Collapse may sound scary, but it a desirable stage en route to a more delightful, more sustainable world."

Count the cost

Of course it's not quite that simple. The Collapsitarians are mostly well-to-do folk, often self-employed, and perhaps well-situated to weather an economic eclipse. But how about the misery of mass unemployment, the disenfranchised majority suddenly declared surplus, with no job, no food, no future? There is already a grave problem, with official unemployment approaching 10 percent, while, when counting part-time work and those who have stopped looking for work, the real figure is 16.4 percent, according to John Miller of Wheaton College.

For centuries we have accepted as the gospel truth that Capitalism is the way to go and questioning it a heresy. This view is greatly cheered on by church-going folk who see heaven as their destination rather than a renewed earth and so couldn't care less what happens here. It reminds me of a saying attributed to Dresden James, who wrote that "when a well-packaged pack of lies has been sold gradually to the masses over generations, the truth will seem utterly preposterous and its speaker a raving lunatic." I know I have been called that, and, no doubt, others will be too.

Babylon must fall

One of them is Dr Tony Campolo, a man often quoted in the *Christian Courier*. He is professor emeritus at Eastern University, he founded the Evangelical Association for the Promotion of Education, and his most recent books are *The God of Intimacy and Action* and *Red Letter Christians*. Yes, he too is a collapsitarian.

In an article in *Tikkun*, a Jewish magazine, he writes that "Babylon" was the code word that St. John used for The Roman Empire, and relating that to our own time we should recognize that what the apostle said about the Roman Empire applies to every societal system. That means that our Babylon is the American political-economic social order, which, like all Babylons, is doomed to fall, because its consumerism makes it impossible to be sustained. He quotes Revelation 18:12-13 to back up his argument.

Dr Campolo writes that "there is an obvious parallel in Revelation to the American Babylon. Ours is a consumeristic lifestyle that exhausts 42 percent of the world's resources, even though Americans constitute just six percent of the world's population. Our consumerism, like that of the Roman Empire, brings down our Babylon. Whether our political-economic system collapses in the immediate future as a result of our present crisis, or at some time in the future, is hard to predict. Frankly, it sure looks like now!"

He writes that "when our Babylon falls, there will be two reactions. The first will be the reaction of those whom the Bible names as "the merchants." We read that "they wept and mourned, crying out, 'Alas, alas, the great city, where all who had ships at sea grew rich by her wealth!' For in one hour she has been laid waste." (Revelation 18:18-19)

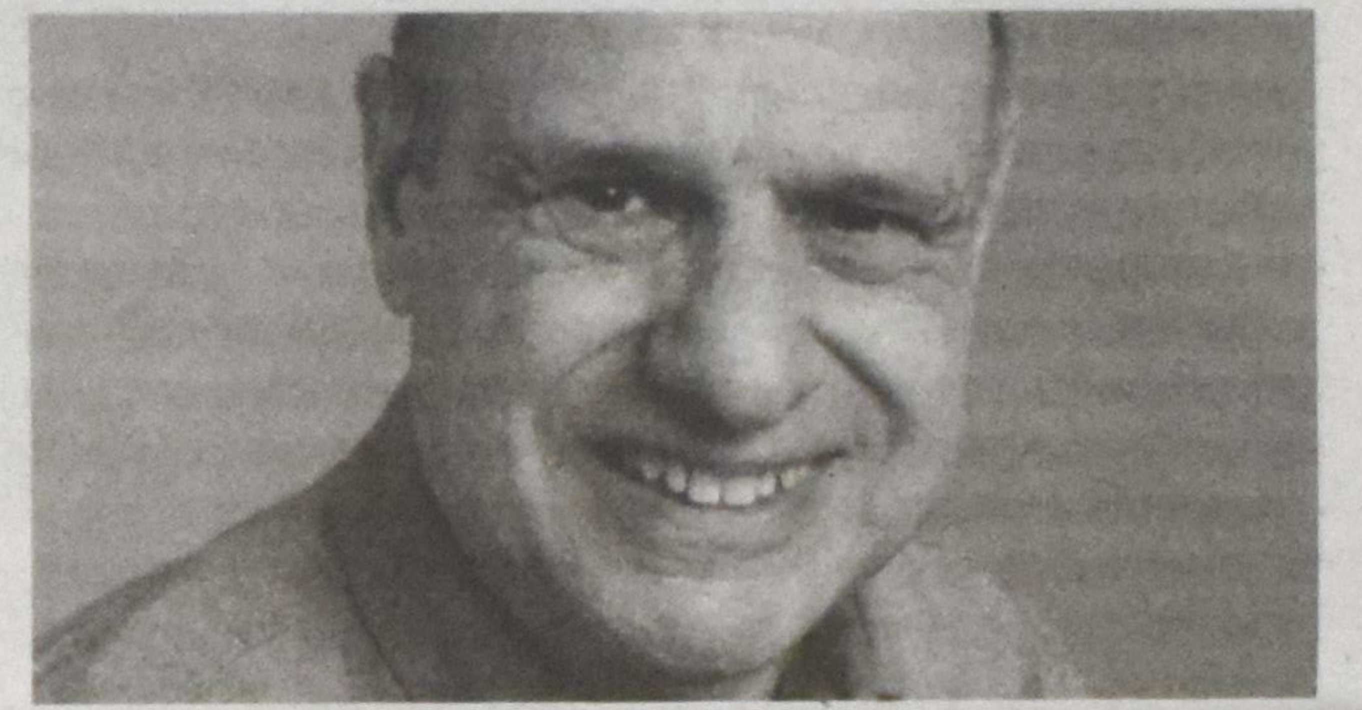
This is a true portrait of the millions now in deep financial distress, including those "merchants" in shopping centers, unable to move the stocks of consumer goods.

Dr Campolo continues, "but there's another reaction to the collapse of Babylon. It can be heard in the shouts of a great assembly. The shouts are coming from people who are committed to God and his Kingdom. With acclamations of praise they say, 'Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power to our God, for his judgments are true and just; he has judged the great whore who corrupted the earth with her fornication.'" (Revelation 19:1b-2a)

Caught with our treasures

Babylon is called a whore because, like a whore, it has seduced people. Those whose citizenship and commitments have been in Babylon have been seduced into a comfortable "dainty" lifestyle of consumerism and now are having to face the reality that this lifestyle has come to an end. They are being forced to realize the truth:

"The fruit for which your soul longed has gone from you, and all your dainties and your splendor are lost to you, never to be found again! ... and the sound of harpists and minstrels and of flutists and trumpeters will be heard in you no more; and an artisan of any trade will be found in you no more; and the sound of the millstone will be heard in you no more; and the light of a lamp will shine in you no more; and the voice of bridegroom and bride will be heard in you no more; for your merchants were the magnates of the earth, and all nations were deceived by your sorcery." (Revelation 18:14, 22-23)



Tony Campolo

The Good News is that as the facts of the collapse of Babylon spread, the people of God are not disheartened. This is because they were never allured by it in the first place. They were a people who had been "seeking, first and foremost, the Kingdom of God." (Matthew 6:33) These people of faith, following the instructions of their Lord, had not laid up for themselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, but, instead, had invested themselves in the Kingdom of God – a kingdom that will last forever. (Matthew 6:19-20)

Do not be afraid

Campolo continues, "In the face of the collapse of our American Babylon, we have to ask how much we have been a people whose lives and resources have been invested in God's Kingdom, so that the collapse of our political-economic system does not threaten us. In the context of the collapse, with whom will we stand? Will we be with the merchants, and weep because our lives and resources have been invested in Babylon; or will we be able to join with those who shout 'Hallelujah' because the seductive Babylon and all of the evils that go with her seduction are no more?"

He writes, "As our economic system collapses, I am coming to realize for the first time in my life that Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount are the most sensible words ever spoken. He said, 'No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth. Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you – you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, "What will we eat?" or "What will we drink?" or "What will we wear?" For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today.'" (Matthew 6:24-33)

Where do we stand?

What does all this mean?

It means that we must get ready for the second coming of the Lord which will come like a thief, says 2 Peter 3:10. Peter the apostle also tells us to look forward to that day and speed its coming, which, in essence means that we also must become collapsitarians, awaiting not Utopia but the reality of the Kingdom. Dr Campolo did that by pointing out the ultimate fragility of our economic system, whose collapse, together with the immense dangers we face in climate change and other perils, will endanger everything we now take for granted. We too can speed up the coming of the Kingdom by spreading the Good News of its imminent arrival.

Bert Hielema lives in Tweed, Ontario, where plenty of rain promises a bountiful harvest. He can be reached at hielema@allstream.net

Society

To be or not to be afraid

Sonya VanderVeen Feddema

My friend pointed out a headline in a national newspaper: "Be afraid! Be very afraid!" Such a secular imperative isn't surprising in the present economic, political and social climate. Yet, it stands in stark contrast to the recurring biblical command, "Don't be afraid!" Each mandate – to be afraid or not to be afraid – is based on a spiritual choice.

To choose to be afraid takes no effort at all. It comes naturally. To choose not to be afraid is impossible in our own strength. After all, the world is riddled with things to be afraid of. Though a world without fear existed once in the Garden of Eden when God walked in the cool of the day with Adam and Eve, his sinless children, we have no memory of it. All we have ever known has been marred by fear or our struggle to overcome it.

Mary's fear

When I feel afraid, I remember the stories of God appearing to his people, either personally or through an angelic visitor, and usually, before delivering a message, declaring, "Don't be afraid!" He came to Mary the mother of Jesus, to the shepherds to whom the angels sang, to his disciple Peter, to Mary Magdalene and to many others. All these people were like you and me, living fearful lives and longing for God to give victory over fear.

It was a normal day for Mary until God sent the angel Gabriel to her. That's when fear really set in. Mary was greatly troubled at the angel's words. What did he mean when he said that she was highly favored and that the Lord was with her?

But Gabriel's calming voice spoke to Mary's fears, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High . . . His kingdom will never end." (Luke 1:30-33)

Mary chose to obey and not to be afraid when she replied, "I am the Lord's servant. May it be to me as you have said." (Luke 1:38)

What we need to hear

The shepherds didn't display macho bravery when the angel (and later angel*s*) burst in on their nighttime socializing and reveries. Instead, they were terrified.

But the angel knew what they needed to hear, "Do not be afraid!" He was telling them the best news they would ever hear – the Savior had been born! – and he didn't want them to miss out on salvation's joy because of fear's paralysis.

Like Mary, the shepherds chose to obey and not to be afraid. They ran to Bethlehem, found Mary and Joseph and the baby Jesus, and told everyone about him, glorifying and praising God as they went.

Fast forward to Peter and the disciples in their storm-tossed boat, buffeted by winds and high waves, shrouded by darkness, and far from shore. What a recipe for fear! If that wasn't bad enough, suddenly they saw something or someone walking on the water. Can we blame them for thinking it was a ghost and crying out in fear? "Don't be afraid!" resounded across the water. Jesus told them what so many others before them needed to hear and what we also need to hear.

By declaring, "Truly you are the Son of God" (Matt. 14:33), Peter and the disciples took steps forward in the direction of living bold and fearless lives.

A holy example

Jesus' struggle with fear inspires me more than any other as I face my fears.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed for God to spare him the agony of the cross, his anguish so intense that his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground. It was the night that he submitted to his Father's will despite his fears, the night he was betrayed into the hands of sinners.

Significantly, "Don't be afraid!" was one of the first commands uttered after Jesus' resurrection. At the empty tomb, the angel spoke it to the seeking women. Later, when the women hurried away from the tomb to tell the disciples the good news, Jesus met them, and said, "Do not be afraid!" (Matt. 28:10)

His command to the women echoes down through history to us. It's a command he expects us to obey – with his divine help. When we do, we'll be able to declare with the psalmist, "The Lord is my light and my salvation – whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life – of whom shall I be afraid?" (Psalm 27:1)

Sonya VanderVeen Feddema is a freelance writer living in St. Catharines, Ont. She has recently published her first children's picture book, Monzi and Mama's Stories, *copies of which can be ordered at sonyavf55@hotmail.com.*

Collapse 2010

Brett Alan Dewing

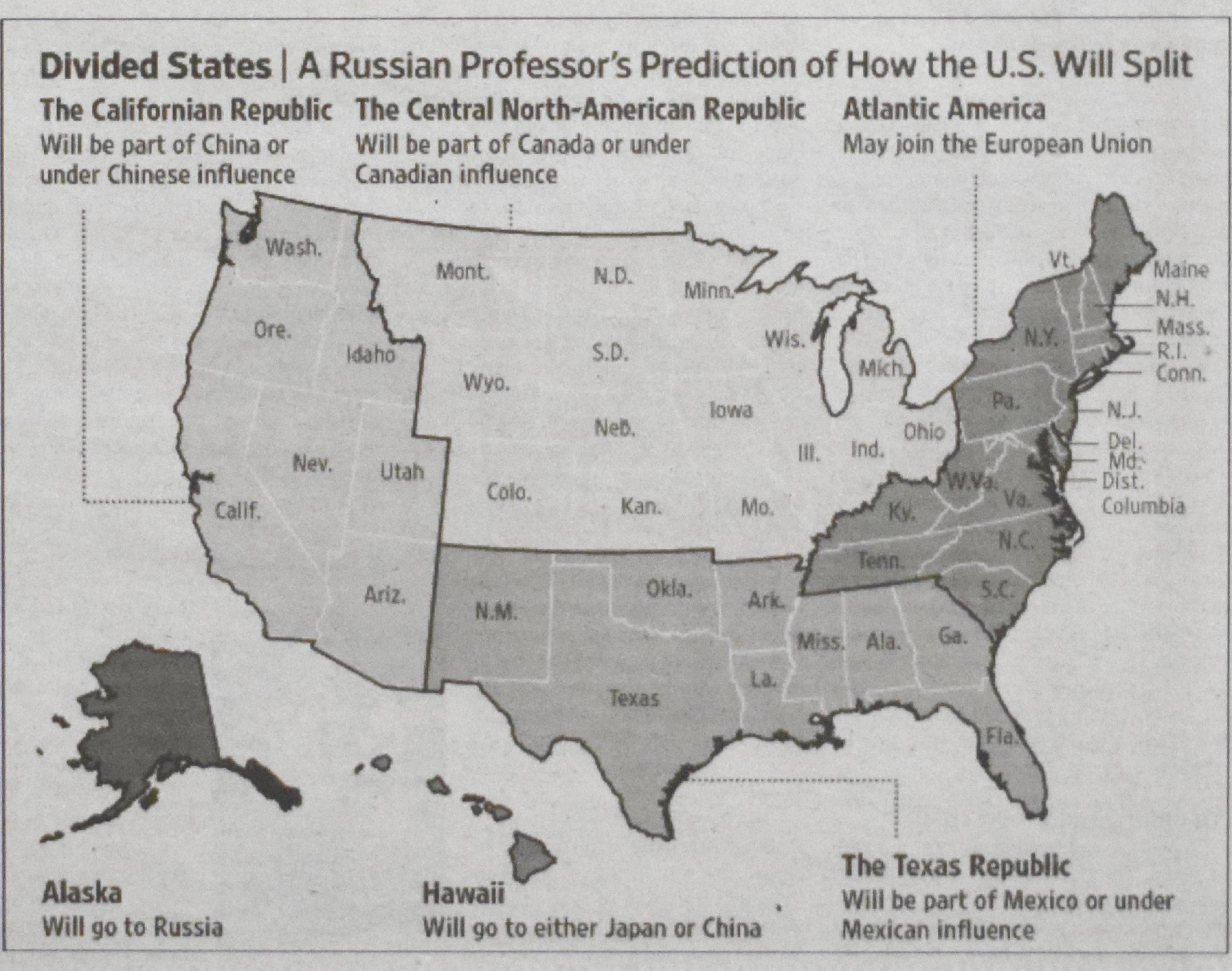
Collapsitarians may not have long to wait. Less than a year ago, former KGB analyst Igor Panarin predicted the dissolution of the US by July in the year 2010.

Panarin claims to have based his theories on classified data, suggesting that economic and social distress will soon lead to a second American civil war. With unrest installed, foreign powers are expected to swoop in, claiming bits of the former USA for their own.

Few have given his warnings credence, Panarin maintains that there is a 55 per cent chance of his predictions becoming history. One could rejoice in that process," the Russian statesman said, "but if we're talking reasonably, it's not the best scenario for Russia."

The sudden death of the US would change the entire world economy overnight. Not too many are quaking in their boots yet, but Panarin is quick to cite Frenchman Emmanuel Todd, saying, "When he forecast the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1976, people laughed at him."

(right, a map of the projected new America)



Columnists

Words from Wild Horses
Kenny Warkentin

Christ with us

How many of us know that Christ is with us? I mean, really with us! That he walks with us, closer than a brother. For years, I did not sense that. I would have said that Christ was far away from me, yet in reality it was I who walked away from him, not the other way around. In my own broken state of meeting my own needs, I turned my back on Christ, who stood there waiting for me, walking with me through every situation. Every second, he was with me.

Coming to realize this has profoundly impacted my sense of aloneness. At one point, I would have pegged myself as a lonely person. I could interact and be social, the life of the party, but deep down, I felt profound loneliness. For years, the only way I knew how to ease that loneliness was through sex, shopping, eating and mindless entertainment, anything that made me feel good. It was a temporary fix for deeper issues that I needed to address.

Healing through openness

As I began to look at the specific issues in my life that made me act out in negative ways, the knowledge that Christ was with me began to become unveiled. I was desperate to know Christ more and to be known by him. Seeking support, I found a prayer ministry that focused on relational and sexual issues, and through the program I experienced healing in the midst of talking about my wounds, and the misconceptions that I had with Christ and who I was as God's son in the presence of others. Christ showed me his arms, his tears, and his ears, through those who stood by to embrace me, cry with me and listen to painful memories. Christ was with me. Opening up to others, allowing them to see the pain and suffering in my life and not be rejected, was a liberating process for me.

Facing my imperfections is not always easy, and often I revert back to old ways of coping, trying to meet my own needs, yet Christ continues to show me that when I admit my weakness, his strength will be made perfect. That it is okay to be known by others, the body of Christ.

Healing through art

More recently, I walked this out again as I participated in a Living Waters Conference in Kansas City. During the past year, I found myself walling off emotionally. My wife and I had miscarried twice, and I needed to face the deep grief. But I really feared losing control. I was afraid I would find myself alone, thinking that my grief was too much for others to handle, too much for Christ to hold. Yet, Christ continued to bring me to a place of readiness. While at the conference, I participated in an art workshop that allowed me the time to face the grief, using color and textures to express the pain. Christ was with me with every brush stroke, as healing tears flowed freely allowing me to give over to him my "aloneness" in grief. He showed me a picture of his glory which took me by surprise.

Healing continues

Christ continues to refine, restore and redeem me in ways that go beyond my wildest imagination and understanding. I continue to learn that being alone with Christ is more wonderful than I could have imagined. I realized that his ways are perfect and that he knows the right timing and the right place. He knows me far better than I know myself. As I learn this, I find that I am more at peace with being alone with him, that I actually need to be alone in his presence to hear his voice and to hear the words "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

Claude Monet painted to express his grief. as his wife Camille lay dying. (1879)

Continuing this journey of life means realizing this over and over again. God will again need to show me Christ dwelling with me through the hard stuff and through the easy stuff. Christ wants me to know he isn't going anywhere.

As I experienced this during the summer, my wife and I found out we are pregnant, and with that came excitement. But there was also a level of fear that rose underneath the joy. I was reminded that Christ isn't finished with me and that he wants the best for me through greater healing of long-standing fear. I will leave the issue of fear for another article. At the moment, I am enjoying Christ with me.

Kenny Warkentin (paintpent@mts.net) is an avid blogger, thinker and artist.

Bienke's story (Part V)

This is part five of the life of Jacobina Wilhelmina Radsma, née Vlaar, as told to her daughter Marion. The series will continue in following issues.

My new bicycle was another sacrifice to the war. Just before the war, I had saved up my hard-earned money and bought myself a brand new bike. My brothers commandeered my pride and joy one day and took it to the top of the roof; they planted it right beside the chimney and anchored it tightly. They fed electrical wire down from the bike to the living room. The boys would take turns to climb up on the roof to the bike and pedal as fast as they could; the faster they peddled, the more light we would have in the living room. People learn to be very inventive if they need to be. The bike provided us with a very, very small light – and never for very long, because not only was it dark and cold and lonely up there, it was also exhausting work, and the boys got bored very quickly. Finally my battered beauty broke from all the heavy use, and I was out one hard-earned bicycle before I even had a chance to properly enjoy it. This all happened because we were cut off completely from electricity. After the bike broke, we floated a small candle in water; that was our only light source for the whole house.

An unforgettable bike ride!

When we had been at war for a couple of years, my grandmother on my father's side came to visit. I was 18- or 19-years-old – Opoe was a youthful 90. Nevertheless, she decided she had to have a bicycle ride. I was the fortunate one chosen to give the ride. Opoe, bless her plucky heart, climbed up behind me on the carrier, clutched me tightly and away we went. I was peddling merrily along when I suddenly realized that my bike seemed a lot lighter. To my horrified amazement when I looked back, I saw Opoe rolling down the road towards the ditch at the bottom of the dike. Fortunately, when she finally came to a stop, she stood up dusty but unhurt. She marched back to my bike, clearly expecting to continue. So there we went again! The old lady seemed frail; she was a tiny woman who weighed maybe 90 pounds soaking wet in all her full skirts, but she was tough! She died at 91 and a half years; she came down with a cold and, because this was a war year and the house was completely without heat, she died of it.

Life went on

Any meetings we planned had to be held in the daytime because of the curfew, the cold (we had no heat at all!) and the lack of electricity. We had no heat in the church, either – in winter time! It was very cold in church, but no matter what, the churches were full. Many people who at one time had come to only one service on Sunday now also started attending the second Sunday service.

And through it all, we were able to maintain much of the fun we enjoyed before the war; most of our social lives still consisted of skating in the winter and swimming in the summer. We had choir and gym practices (and performances) as well as Young Peoples' Society and catechism classes to keep us busy all year round. And since there were so many young people in my house, as well as in the rest of the village, we were bound to have fun.

But there were many sad times too. For example, a couple of boys from Andijk who were not careful enough were grabbed during one of the razias or raids and sent first to Germany, later to Russia. One boy came back after the war, the other did not. These were both boys that I went to school with, they were my age. The boy who did not make it back was the only son in the family, although he had four sisters. Then there was another instance: three boys, two of them brothers, were on their bikes riding from one place to another. They were stopped by the Germans (this was only two days before the capitulation) and accused of having weapons. They did not but were nonetheless shot and killed right there and then. There were too many stories like that, too many. There was also a night when my sister and I heard many footsteps around our house – and those footsteps were being made by heavy boots. The houses of our neighbours next door and two homes away as well as our house were all surrounded by soldiers. Things like that always had to be done by night it seemed.

Bienke and Brechie Andijk

Dreadful night

German soldiers appeared everywhere. Once we heard our next door neighbour girl shouting out of her upstairs window, "Neighbour, please help me, help us," over and over. She sounded absolutely terrified. We told our father that he had to help her. So he opened the back door so he could step outside to see what was going on and to find out if he could help. His first foot was not even on the sidewalk yet and a weapon was pointed at him. He was told to get inside and not to come out again. My sister and I were peeking through a small window at the end of our bed. They growled at us to go back to bed in Dutch, so we knew they were Dutch SS'ers. We snuck across to the front hall and peeked through the mail slot in the front door. Even though we were very quiet, they must have heard us, because a soldier came to that door and ordered us to get away from there and go to bed. That was the second time we were told to go to bed. We were not children anymore! My sister was 23 and I was 20 years old. Who did these midnight terrorists think they were? We were way too anxious and fearful to even think of retreating to bed, even though by this time it was already two in the morning. Instead we huddled together inside, wondering and worrying. After a couple of hours, all was quiet again, but what an alarming night.

What really happened that night?....find out as the story continues next issue.

What's better: to live or to give life?

So it is written:
"The first man Adam became a living being,"
the last Adam a life-giving spirit.
I Cor. 15:45

A. A. VanRuler

This text is a remarkable one in the apostle's argumentation. In a series of distinctions and comparisons he described the contrasts and the similarities of present and future mankind. He formulated the last distinction as follows: a natural body is sown and a spiritual body raised. (v. 44a)

Just to revisit, he argued in the last part of v. 44 that if there is a natural body, then there is a spiritual body as well. There is a huge and daring leap in that thought. The apostle anchored his thoughts in what is a given, namely that there exists now a body that is formed and controlled by the soul. That is a rock-hard fact. So if that body is there and therefore indeed *can* exist, there can also be a body that is formed and controlled by the Spirit, and it is indeed there.

A daring leap

Now it is as if the apostle senses the daring aspect of this jump. In the text he, perhaps unwittingly, bolsters his argument. Is there not a word from Scripture on which he can found his argument a bit more solidly? Immediately he thinks of Gen. 2:7 where is written that God, as it were, cut the man out of the earth like a lump of clay and then breathed into him the life-giving Spirit. Through it, the man became a living soul, a living psyche. With that thought, Paul finds a securely scriptural foundation for his statement about the psyche and the body. That puts his mind at rest: Scripture speaks the same language.

The funny thing here is that Paul cannot find anything else in Scripture. For his thought about the spiritual body he has no clear indication from Scripture. For a moment he thinks about the Spirit of life that, according to Gen. 2, is breathed into the man. But then he quickly jumps to his own apostolic gospel and does not hesitate to add something to Scripture: the first man, Adam, became a living soul and the last Adam, a life-giving Spirit.

With that, he thinks of Christ, of course. *He,* in the first place, is that spiritual body, formed and controlled by the Spirit. Now that is a big event: in Gen. 2, while giving life, the life-giving Spirit remained God's Spirit. In spite of being breathed into the man, he only became a living soul. But in the gospel the Spirit came, so to speak, into the man and into the body. For that reason the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. In him the spiritual body appeared fully in reality.

Living and life-giving

It is obvious here that we are again led back to the distinction between soul and spirit. Inherited from the first Adam, we are only beings that are limited and directed by the soul. In Christ, on the other hand, we have a body that is directed by the Spirit. In him all things find their original and final destination. The Spirit connects us with God and makes us live according to his intentions.

However, Paul points out a second distinction here. Whereas Adam became a *living* soul, Christ became a *life-giving* spirit. The soul, natural man, only lives and shares in life; he lives thanks to the spirit that was breathed into him. But the Spirit, the spiritual man, Christ, does not only live, but *gives* life. The soul is what is alive, the Spirit makes life. He awakens life and calls into being where it is not and gives it to others.

This is indeed characteristic for Christ. He awakens us to life. He creates it and gives it to us.

Indeed, in a general way this is true for people as well. One living person works in a fertilizing and creative way upon the other. That is the essence of history and culture. That aspect is so strongly present in language as well. The mother speaks at her baby's cradle and, in this way, magically evokes speech. Teachers and professors evoke in their students knowledge and science.

Even these are things truly astounding, this transfer of spirit from one person to the next. But in Christ, according to the apostle, we find the epitome of this phenomenon. He is the last Adam. He is the man from heaven and has become a life-giving spirit. He gives us life, also in the sense that he makes us conquer death. We rise above it.

Created out of nothing, called out of nothingness

That is even more than creation itself. In the first creation we were made out of nothing and became a living soul. Through Christ, however, we are called out of death into life. He is a life-giving spirit.

Death is even worse than nothing. The nothingness out of which we were called is a pure nothingness, a pure negative. But death, into which we fell because of our sin, is truly something. It is the perdition of what has been created. We are gone. And that is quite different from not yet being there. We are no *longer* there. Death is, so to speak, thrown-away reality. Nothingness is basically not-yet-realized possibility.

Now, it is no small thing that we have been called out of nothingness. We cannot think too highly about that. We must be glad about that. But being called out of death into life is even greater. Above all, one must not neglect that fact. It is particularly that fact that undergirds the praises of the Christian church. The church praises God for his gift of eternal life after Christ's conquest of death. The life-giving spirit rises above and beyond the living soul.

For our sake

Moreover, there is another distinction in the text. Adam was a living soul and lived himself, for himself and by himself. Yes, there was fertilization and begetting by which Adam and Eve became a father and mother after life begat life. But Jesus is a living-giving spirit. Surely, he also lives himself as the risen and glorified Lord, but he is there especially for others in order to awaken them to life from death. For that reason particularly he is the life-giving spirit.

On the one hand, that is more: to awaken to life is more than life itself, to raise from death is more than to give life to children. More power is needed for that.

On the other hand, it is also less. Christ is there for others while Adam is there for himself. As the mediator, Christ is there for mankind's sake. But why is mankind there? It is there to be just that, in God's face to please him as his image.

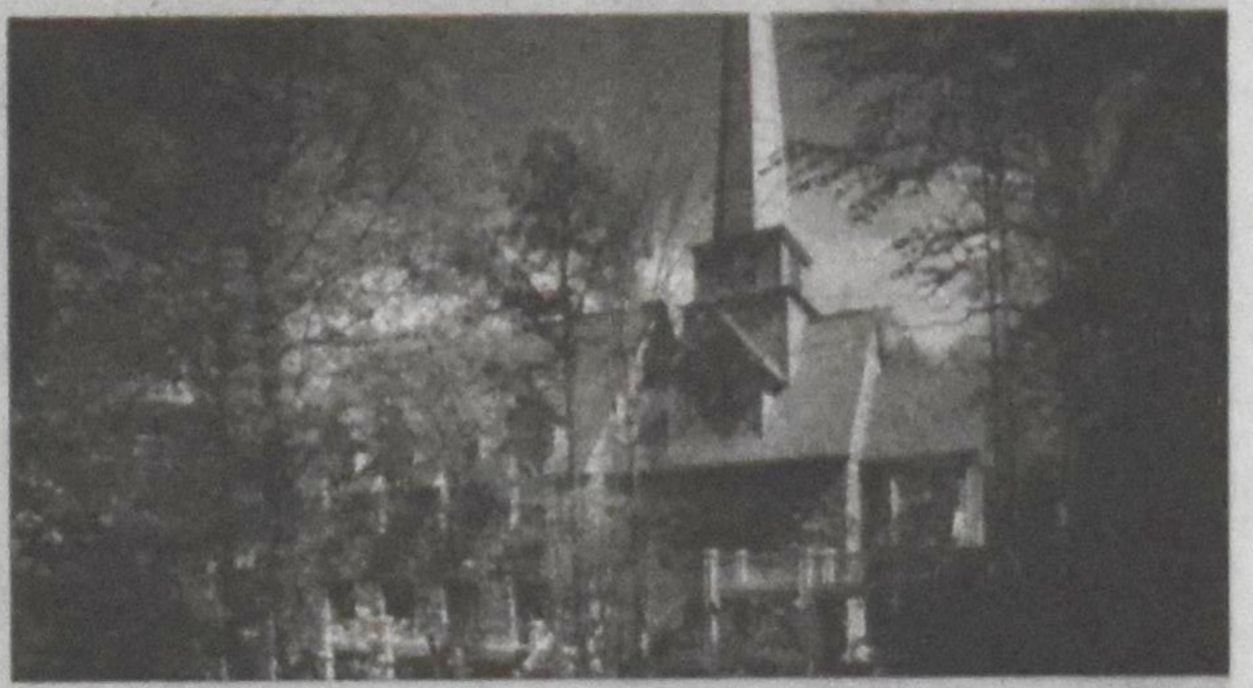
Mankind is his aim, his goal. God finds rest in that. As Christians we also bear in some way the image of Christ, living for others. In love we stand as mediators in the universe and are there for the sake of others. But our final destination is not found in that. It is not found in our being a Christian, but in our personhood. Our final destination is not in being there for others, but in simply *being there.* Put more crassly, not love, but joy is our destiny, and we rejoice in that joy in everything – that joy even in our own selves.

Translated by Bram Hoff of St. Catharines, ON

Chapel service

Berta Hosmar

During a recent visit to the Smoky Mountains of North Carolina we had the privilege of visiting the Chatlos Memorial Chapel and Visitors Center at the Cove, just outside Asheville.



The chapel is a magnificent mountain sanctuary, located on the grounds of the Billy Graham Training Center. Its steeple soars some 87 feet above the roofline. Inside the chapel you won't find stained glass windows; instead all the windows offer stunning mountain views through the forest canopy.

On the chapel's lower level you can find exhibits on Billy Graham's ministry to the world, and above the chapel, tucked high in the base of the steeple, you'll find a quiet prayer room. That prayer room was added at the special request of Ruth Graham, who did not think a house of God should be without a quiet place where people could pray.

"Visit to the Cove"

We had come with a busload of tourists from Southern Ontario, and on the itinerary we had received when booking this trip it only mentioned, among other attractions, a "visit to the Cove in Asheville."

I'm quite sure that many of our travel companions, including I, did not have a clue what the Cove was, and I had assumed it was a restaurant. Upon arrival at our hotel, after a bus trip of two days, we were greeted by our tour guides, Larry and Patsy, a couple well-known to some of us, for the Travel Company we had booked with employs them during the fall and winter months as host and hostess at a hotel in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Larry and Patsy both grew up in the area we were about to visit. We knew that both are Christians.

On our last day in Asheville we left the hotel to visit the Cove, and by now we all knew it was connected to Billy Graham and his ministry.

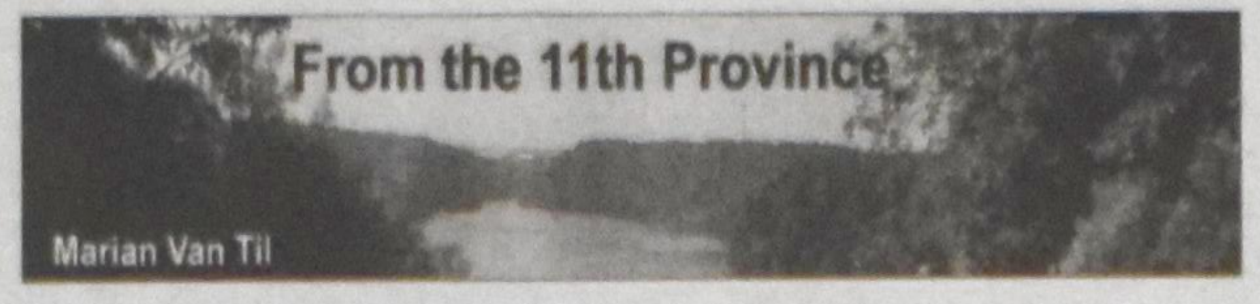
A surprising lesson

Although several in our group did not seem to be members of a church, nobody stayed behind at the hotel. Larry gave us information during the bus ride. He freely told us more about Billy Graham's ministry, his crusades, and the message of salvation he brought to the world. He quoted Billy's motto, "I am just a spectator watching what God is doing," and repeated Billy's words, "Everywhere I go I find that people, both leaders and individuals, are asking one basic question: Is there any hope for the future? Is there any hope for peace, prosperity and justice in our generation?"

Now, for the Christians on our bus – and we knew there

Continued on p.14

Calvinists



The other Calvinists

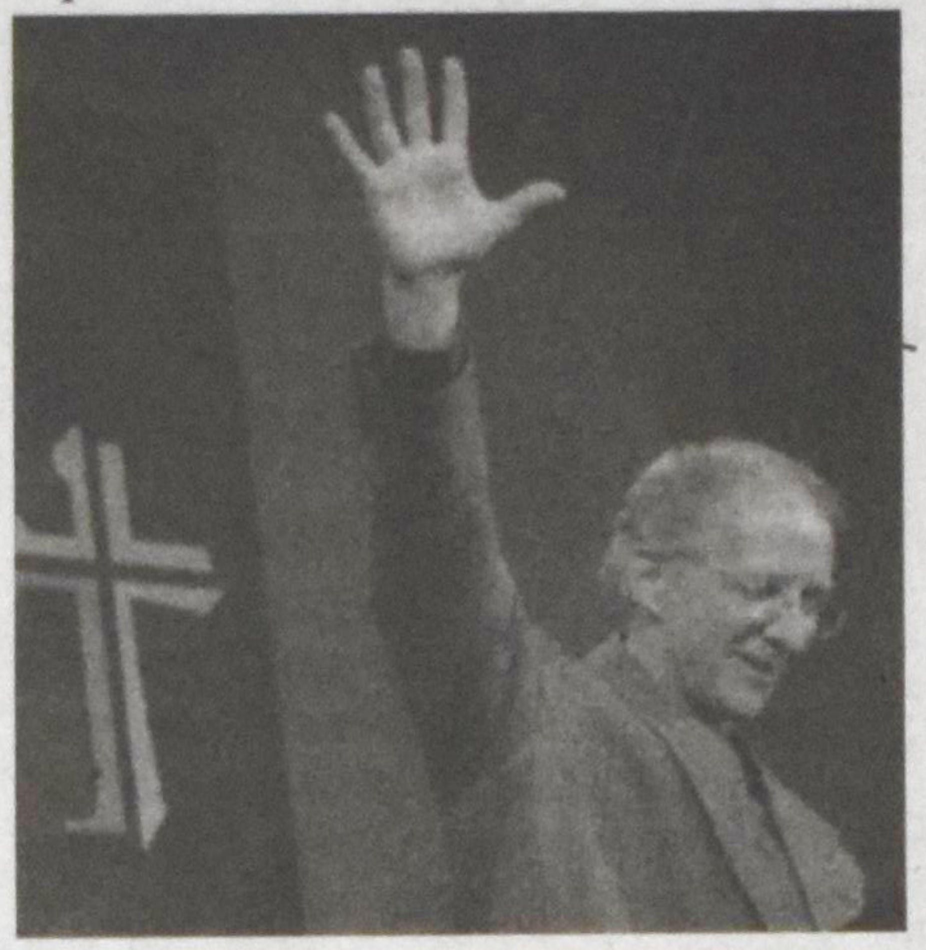
John Calvin is 500! In the July 13 issue of *CC*, Peter Schuurman reported on a conference at the U. of T. called "Rediscovering Calvin: Resources for Renewal Today." The organizer admitted, "We had hoped for twice as many people." And Schuurman noted that the people who did attend were "mostly an over-50 crowd, with just a handful of students in their 20s." It looked like Calvin's Christian legacy is "uncertain."

There were three churches represented, two of them mainline: United, Presbyterian and Christian Reformed. *That* was likely the problem. It is time we North American Kuyperian Calvinists (with Dutch roots) become aware that there are other Calvinists on our continent who have picked up the ball that we seem to have dropped. Some of us have become weary of our heritage; some are attracted to an "easier," less studious evangelicalism. But these "other Calvinists" are running with the ball energetically and enthusiastically, and turning people of all ages on to the depth and glory of biblical Christianity as insightfully interpreted by John Calvin.

Schuurman mentioned two: John Piper and Mark Driscoll. There are quite a few others, among them Albert Mohler and Tim Keller. Calvin's robust biblical understanding of God and God's Word is what these other Calvinists embrace, preach and teach. They understand what Calvin understood about being "God-serious," as Jim Schaap calls it (*C.C.*, July 27). No "moral, therapeutic deism" for these guys!

The results of Piper's, Mohler's and Keller's Calvinistically biblical approach are exhilarating to hear, see and read. What may surprise you is that the first two are Baptists; and Keller is part of the mainline Presbyterian Church. Piper is senior pastor at Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis; Mohler is President of the Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky; Keller, a Westminister Seminary graduate, is pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Manhattan.

Piper: 'Christian hedonist'



John Piper's particular and continual stress on God's glory has recharged my own Calvinistic faith. It's not so much that what he says is new, as newly (often poetically) cast so that it hits one anew. Piper's "Christian hedonism" is the primary example. On his website he quotes Blaise Pascal: "'All men seek happiness. This is without exception. Whatever different means they employ … this is the motive of every action of every man, even of those who hang themselves.'"

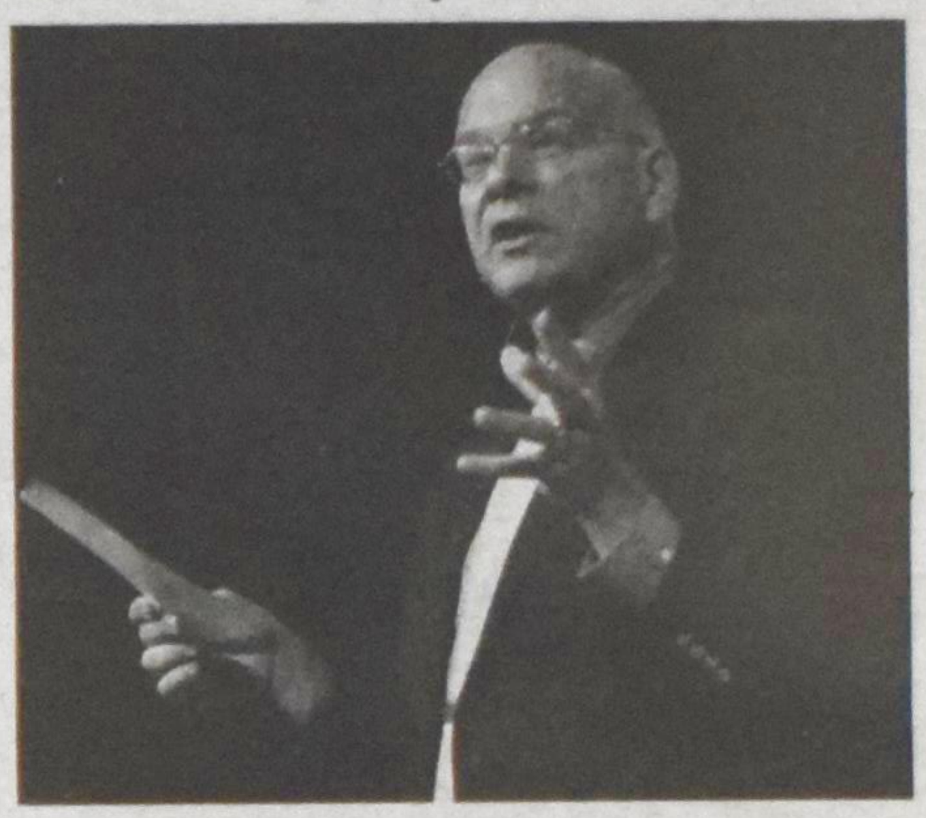
Then Piper himself says, "We believe Pascal is right. And, with Pascal, we believe God purposefully designed us to pursue happiness.… *We value most what we delight in most.* Pleasure is not God's competitor, idols are. Pleasure is simply a gauge that measures how valuable someone or something is to us.… Christian Hedonism is not a contradiction after all. It is desiring the vast, ocean-deep pleasures of God more than the mud-puddle pleasures of wealth, power or lust. We're Christian Hedonists because we believe Psalm 16:11, 'You show me the path of life; in Your presence there is fullness of joy, in Your right hand are pleasures for evermore.'" Then Piper urges, "Join us in this pursuit of satisfaction in God, because *God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him.*"

His website is <www.DesiringGod.org>, a vastly useful and inspiring site with reams of free material that highlight Piper's strength as a biblical expositor. Desiring God holds an annual national conference. This year's focuses on Calvin: "With Calvin in the Theater of God" (Sept. 25-27, Minneapolis).

Mohler: 'reigning evangelical intellectual'

Albert Mohler is best-known to non-Baptists through his radio program, books and online writings. *Time* has called him the "reigning intellectual of the evangelical movement in the U.S." But he doesn't live in an ivory tower. His blog at **<www.AlbertMohler.com>** tackles current events and social issues, analyzing them from a Biblical and Reformed perspective. Mohler's insights are most useful for helping Christians make sense of our secular culture and our witness to it.

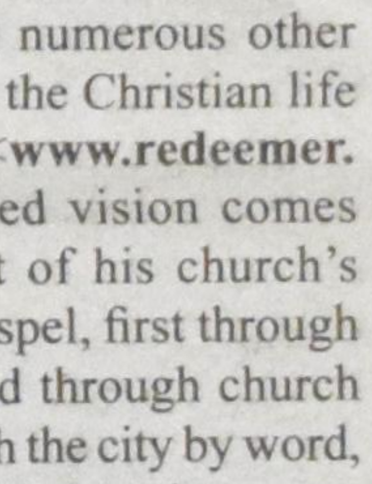
Keller: Extraordinary preacher, urban missionary



Tim Keller, too, makes available on a website his sermons and numerous other resources that encompass the Christian life and life of the church (**<www.redeemer.com>**). Keller's Reformed vision comes through in the statement of his church's vision: "To spread the gospel, first through ourselves [i.e., among and through church members] and then through the city by word, deed, and community; To bring about personal changes, social healing, and cultural renewal through a movement of churches and ministries that change New York City and through it, the world." Keller's accessible book *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism* rose to #7 on the *New York Times* Non-Fiction Best-Seller list in March of 2008.

It is hard to over-emphasize how insightful and useful the combined resources these men and their ministries are to Reformed Christians who want to be salt and light to a dark world.

NOTE: Some time ago I offered C.C. readers who wanted one a free copy of Piper's book* Seeing and Savoring Jesus Christ. *I am reiterating that offer, as I still have some copies. Email or call (716-745-7073).



Marian Van Til was a C.C. editor from 1984-2000. She and her husband, Ed Cassidy, live in Youngstown, NY, where Marian is writing her second book, Confessions of a Cataholic, *due out this fall. They've had 10 cats in all, some of which used to go to the C.C. office with Marian. She welcomes email at: marianvantil@roadrunner.com.*

Chapel service *...continued from p. 13*

were several – it was fine to hear all this, but we wondered briefly if others found this short lesson from the Bible perhaps a bit offensive. After all, Christianity has been pushed effectively out of the public place.

A moving visit

But a strange, and rather wonderful part of this visit was yet to come.

Driving on the winding, tree-lined mountain road leading to the Cove, climbing higher and higher, and finally getting out of the bus and inhaling the pure mountain air and viewing the peaceful surroundings seemed to affect everyone. Our voices became somewhat subdued as we entered the chapel and sat down in the pews.

One elderly guide asked us which church we represented, and he seemed rather surprised to discover that we were not a church group. While we waited and took in the peace and quiet, a lady joined us and, after briefly telling us the history of the chapel, she read and quoted several Bible verses and then delivered a rather short, but moving sermon.

Nobody walked out, and after she had finished she went to the piano and asked us to join her in the singing of several hymns. We sang "Amazing grace" and "How great thou art," and as I looked around I saw that several people were singing along.

Then Patsy was asked to sing a few solos, and with a strong and pure soprano voice she treated us to a few praise songs.

Then the biggest surprise came.

The lady asked Larry to pray with us. We knew that he is a leader in his home church, but never had we heard him pray out loud for the tourists under his care.

Larry prayed for the bus driver, for the people on the bus, for the world and its needs, for the ongoing ministry of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, and he asked if many people might realize their need for a Saviour.

An undercover crusade

When he was finished we realized that we had just attended a church service minus the offering! I overheard a few negative comments, but only a few. When invited to visit the prayer room a lady in front of me nudged her husband and said, "Let's go outside, enough is enough," and another lady snickered, "What would I do in a prayer room?" One other man said quietly, "I am not a religious person." But an elderly man was close to tears and said, "I will never forget this hour here, I felt uplifted hearing that sermon and singing together and Larry praying for us all." Later, on the bus, when asked if we had liked this past hour, the comments were all positive.

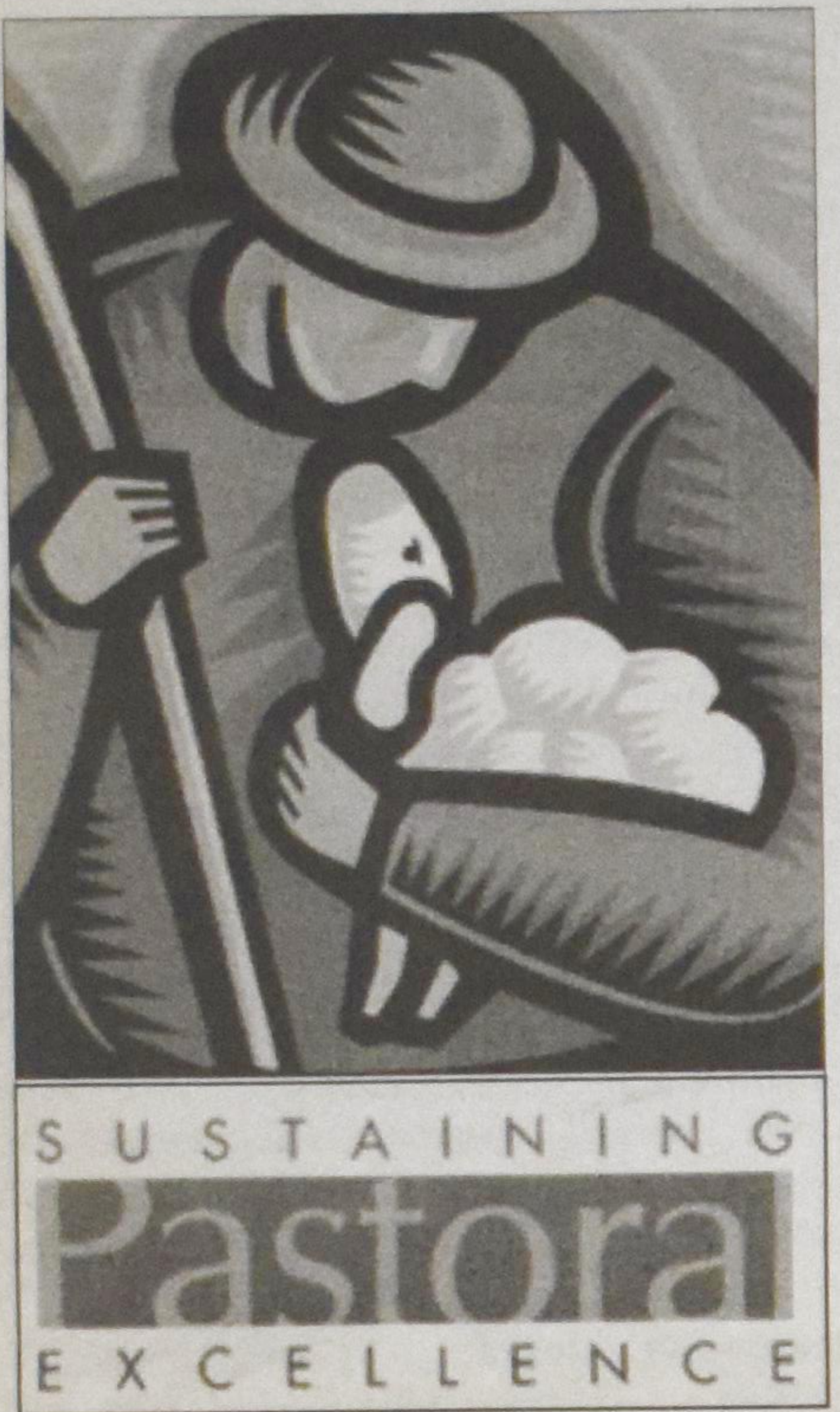
Later I asked Larry, "How did you get permission from your head office to incorporate this religious service?"

Larry just smiled. "They had asked us to make up an itinerary for this trip since we live here, and they gave us a free hand. Besides, we figured that Billy Graham's ministry is so well-known all over the world that we did not expect opposition".

To us it seemed as if Billy Graham had still indirectly been leading a small crusade, even in his old age.

Berta Hosmar lives in Whitby, Ontario.

Growing in Wisdom and Knowledge...for Life!



Bob Zomermaand

Simply Google the term "lifelong learning" and you will discover that there are over a million web pages devoted to the subject. Lifelong learning is most important in our world where the growth of human knowledge and culture is rapidly moving forward. We can be sidelined by those in this culture who are uninterested in the issues of forty or fifty years ago. It is a problem that faces pastors and churches as they struggle to keep abreast of the rapidly changing state of the world. In light of this, many churches and seminaries turn to lifelong learning to sustain pastoral excellence and congregational excitement for the Gospel's relevance in our culture.

Lifelong learning is a necessity as we address the ever-changing world around us. For example, when I was in seminary in the 70's, a debate was going on about the morality of using a (then very scarce) machine called a ventilator to keep humans alive. Today, the ventilator is a commonly available tool utilized in every western hospital when people cannot breathe for themselves. No longer is the debate about the moral use of ventilators immediately relevant. Today the discussion is focused on who is going to pay for the necessary use of the machine. A commitment to lifelong learning will keep us up-to-date on the issues of the culture around us.

On a journey

Many of us find our lives are richer when we take an opportunity to become lifelong learners. In the arena of the church, I believe that God desires us to be lifelong learners who journey with him into his future. However, we often settle for a lackluster spirituality. We are content to stay put, and live as though history itself is stagnant. This is a spirituality that lacks the desire to grow in godliness. In the first letter to Timothy, we find Paul encouraging Timothy to train himself for godliness. If we look at several Scriptural stories we find: Abram and Sarai on a new journey in their old age, Jacob meeting God on his wanderings, and Paul (known for his pursuit of the mission of God) geographically advancing the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. If I might just address pastors for a moment: this journey with God in our own lives as pastors who are seeking excellence means we cannot settle for what we have been in the past. God calls us to walk along with him in history.

Before I list ways to journey with God, and therefore actively being a lifelong learner, I first admit that this takes time. I have the privilege of teaching philosophy and world religions for the University of Phoenix online. My students struggle to balance work, family, community involvement, and study; yet they find great satisfaction in completing a course. They seek training for a better life than they would have without their commitment of time and effort. Paul uses the Greek word from which we get gymnasium to talk about training in his letter to Timothy. That was a place where a person would go to learn the physical skills that a well rounded person ought to have. It took a commitment to training to actually gain the competitive skills. In our walk with Jesus, we cannot settle for less.

The reason I believe we are called to lifelong learning in the Christian faith is that Jesus appeals to us to follow him. That call sounds across the centuries to our ears today. We are called to devote our lives to Jesus. We need to carve out the time to walk with him, listen to him, and be taught by him. Only then we will grow in our understanding of ourselves and of God. And we will experience God deep in our hearts.

Count the ways...

Once we have decided we are going to spend the time and engage ourselves in training in godliness, we can begin. The first thing to do is to read God's Word consistently. Without that, any other learning we do will be missing the single most important factor--the God dimension. With this first step firmly in place your learning can go in many directions. Here are some ideas you can pursue:

Pick up a "deep" book and read for 20 minutes a day. (Sorry moms, Thomas the Tank Engine books do not count.) You can read between 10 and 20 books a year by just giving it a little time. Keep track of what you read. You will feel a great sense of accomplishment as the list grows. I have kept a running account of the books I have read since completing my formal education. It numbers over 600 volumes. The list is a telling way to see which years I was lazy and which years I was stretching my horizons by

Continued on p. 16

A closed heart describes 'a way of being'

Getting Unstuck

Arlene Van Hove

Why love if losing hurts so much? I have no answers anymore, only the life I've lived. Twice in that life, I've been given a choice, as a boy and as a man. The boy chose safety. The man chooses suffering. The pain now is part of the happiness then. That's the deal.

Leonore Fleischer, Shadowlands

"How do you feel when you see these elderly and fragile residents sitting alone day after day without anyone visiting them?" my sister from Eastern Canada asks me after she spend a week with our mother, visiting her every afternoon and evening.

"I feel sad for them," I tell her. At the same time, I am tempted to shrug it off and say, "that is the way it is for the elderly," or "they must be used to it by now," or any other reasonable response. But I am glad I don't. My sadness encourages me to have tea with them sometimes, an experience which helps me get to know them.

On the other hand, when I am tired or out of sorts as I arrive at my mother's facility, I sometimes close my heart to the sadness around me – a defense mechanism that swings into action. I tell myself tomorrow will be a better day. The point is we all use defense mechanisms to get through life.

Yet, the condition of our heart matters. A closed heart turns away from God while an open heart turns towards God. Scripture speaks of the heart within a rich collection of synonymous metaphors. Our hearts can be shut, fat, proud, puffed up or made of stone. And they are often hard. The Greek word for this condition is *sklerokardia:* meaning we have sclerosis of the heart. Still, what happens with a closed heart? Basically it describes a *way of being.*

A defence mechanism

Most often a closed heart affects the mind and reasoning processes (defence mechanisms – see next paragraph), is addicted to the desires of our own selves, is insensitive to wonder and awe, lacks compassion for others and is insensitive to injustice and lacks gratitude.

Most of these "ways of being" are easy to understand. But when I tell myself "that is the way it is for the elderly," or "they must be used to it by now," I am using a defence mechanism called rationalization. In other words, I want to find a reason for the situation so I do not have to feel the pain of their loneliness. Unfortunately, we often do this unknowingly and eventually build a shell around ourselves in an attempt to protect us from the pain of life.

Usually we begin building this shell in childhood. For some, it is the result of a chaotic childhood marked by neglect, abuse, or instability through which the self builds layers of protection to defend itself against an unreliable and painful world. For others, it can be the result of the process of growing up. Let's face it ... growing up is hard to do. Our birth and the development of self-awareness, involves an increasing sense of being a separate person.

Adaptive behaviours

For instance, I was raised in a "group" (ten siblings). The process of separating myself from my parents and siblings became a journey littered with adaptive coping behaviours that caused me to become insensitive to the wonder and awe of the world around me. This is not unusual. Most of us develop adaptive behaviours to make life work for ourselves. Some theorists believe we are an adaptive self for the first half of life. As we move through the second half of life we finally become real or who we are meant to be.

To choose to live well and love fully, we must open our hearts (and therefore our feelings) to the risks of life. As I mentioned in my column last month, Thomas Merton believed we can experience a "thin place" anywhere our hearts are opened. And so it was for me during the third week of July. The beginning of the week was full of sadness as I helplessly watched my aging mother muddle through another day of anxiety and confusion. By the end of the week, we joyfully welcomed our daughter (and her husband and son) home from their trip to China as they brought with them a baby girl – and so, once more, the veil between the "ordinary" and the "sacred" lifted, and I could catch a glimpse of God. And I am pretty sure, my happiness now is part of the pain then. That's the deal.

Arlene Van Hove (avanhove@shaw.ca) is a therapist and a member of the Fleetwood CRC.

Classifieds

Anniversaries

1959 September 12 2009

With thankfulness to God for his faithfulness,
we celebrate the "Gift of life and love"
with our parents, grandparents & great-grandparents

John and Johanna Smit (nee **Schakelaar**)

on the occasion of their **50th Wedding Anniversary**,
September 12, 2009.
We pray that the Lord
will continue to bless you and keep you in his care.
With all our love and congratulations from your family:

Grace & John Van Huizen, *St Catharines, Ont.*
Daniel
Rebecca & Evan

Brian & Terry Smit, *Claremont, Ont.*
Amanda
Charissa & Ryan
Erica

Margaret & Len Climenhage, *St Catharines, Ont.*
Jason & Ashley
Michael & Alicia
James

and great-grandaughter, Kayla.

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Matt.6:33

Home address: Apt 28C-1128 Vansickle Rd
St Catharines ON L2S 3W1

1959 September 5 2009

Deeply grateful to God,

Harry and **Henny VanderWindt** (nee *Bouwers*)

celebrate with their family, their
50th Wedding Anniversary

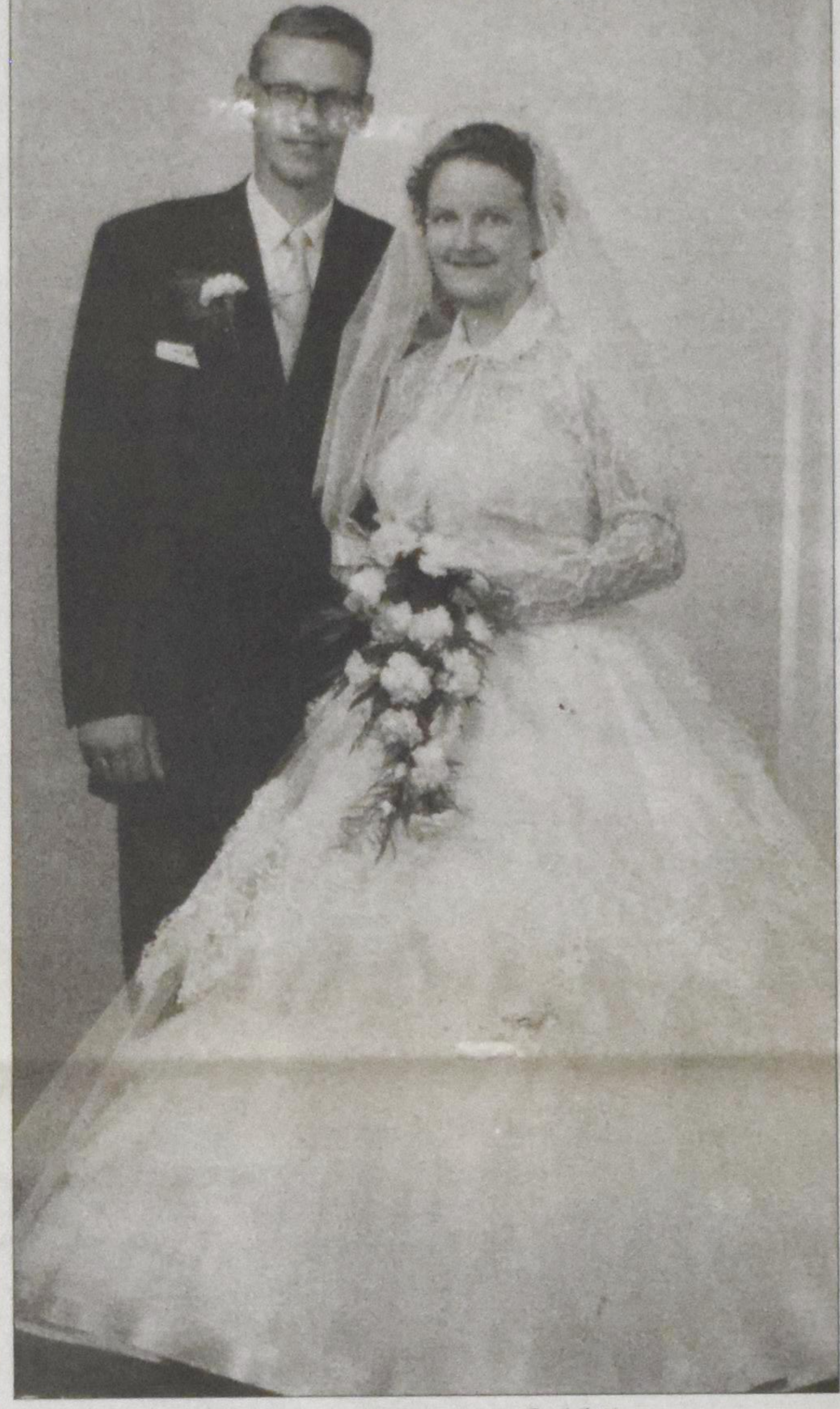
*Commit your way to the Lord;
Trust in him and he will do this.* Psalm 37:5

Ed & Karen VanderWindt, *Ancaster ON*
Matthew, Kathryn, David, Benjamin
John & Renee VanderWindt, *Foxboro ON*
Philip, Rachel
Mike & Judy VanderWindt, *Hamilton ON*
Nicole, Elise, Adrian

All are welcome to an **Open House**:
Sat. Sept. 5, '09, 2:00-5:00 p.m.
at the John Knox Christian School gym,
795 Highway #8, Fruitland, ON. Best wishes only.

Home address: 4 Hunter Rd, Grimsby ON L3M 4A4

50th Wedding Anniversary
1959 – 2009
William and Gaye Wyma



We give praise and thanks to God that our
Parents and grandparents can celebrate
50 years together on September 5!

We love you Dad & Mom, Pake & Beppe!
Jennifer Wyma, *Thunder Bay, ON*
Bruce & Jeanette Johnson – Callum, Brianna, Aidan, *Thunder Bay, ON*
Glenn & Evelyn Stelpstra – Rachel, Nathaniel, *Burlington, ON*

Address: 1349 Dawson Road, Thunder Bay ON P7G 1H8

Obituary

The Lord peacefully took away

J. Derk TeWinkel

on Wednesday, July 29, 2009 at the age of 84.

Born in Aalten, The Netherlands, son of the late Derk Jan and Berendina Aleida (Hoftyzer) TeWinkel. Beloved husband of Dina (Lammers) TeWinkel for 56 years. Dear father of John TeWinkel and his wife Janet of RR 1 Ridgetown, Hetty TeWinkel of Blenheim, Derk TeWinkel and his wife Lori of RR 4 Blenheim, Bernie TeWinkel and his wife Rolien of Tilbury, Gerald TeWinkel and his friend Debbie of Blenheim, Nancy Talbot and her husband Bryan of Burlington, and predeceased by son William TeWinkel (1965). Grandfather of Erin, Paul, Lindsay, and Sean TeWinkel. Brother of Gerrit and Jo TeWinkel, Wim and Rikie TeWinkel, Henk and Sina TeWinkel, Gerhard and Leis TeWinkel all of The Netherlands, and the late Sinie TeWinkel (1999), and Bernard TeWinkel (1937). Also survived by several brothers and sisters-in-law, nieces and nephews.

Mr. TeWinkel was a veteran and served for 3 years in Indonesia with the Dutch Army. He was a member of the Dutch Legion, and the Blenheim Christian Reformed Church.

Funeral Service was held in the Blenheim Christian Reformed Church, on Saturday, August 1, 2009 with Pastor Frank DeBoer officiating. Interment in Evergreen Cemetery, Blenheim. In lieu of flowers, donations to the Canadian Cancer Society would be appreciated. Online condolences may be left at www.mckinlayfuneralhome.com.

Correspondence: RR 3 Blenheim ON L7L 6G2

FRISIAN WEEKEND

Saturday, **August 29** at 1:00 pm
Tillsonburg Fair Grounds
Sunday, **August 30**, at 3:00 p.m. Frisian Service at
Maranatha Christian Reformed Church in
Woodstock with Pastor Hellinga
Camping available. Contact Edna 519-842-5684

Pastoral Excellence *...continued from p. 15*

reading books that taught me new things. Librarians have found that over 50% of all college graduates will never again read a complete book after graduation. Lifelong learners need to challenge the trend. I hope you are among them!

Volunteer to teach in your church's education program this coming year. You will get to know some new brothers and sisters in Christ, and you will learn a great deal about what you teach. Whether you teach adults, youth, or children, your life will be enriched by the experience. Pastors, offer to teach an adult group; then, choose a topic that will force you to read new material. You will grow!

Ask a person older than you to be your prayer partner on a weekly basis. Inform them that you need the accountability. Then begin to pray. Use Scripture as the basis for your prayers. You could use the *Book of Common Prayer*. Or work your way through *Space for God*. Find a way to stretch yourselves in your prayer life. You will get to know God much more personally, and you will gain a friend who shares your joy in the Lord as you pray.

Enroll in a course that is about something you have never studied before. You will expose yourself to new ideas and new perspectives on the world. It will give you lots of new thoughts to discuss at the dinner table and with friends over coffee. Your world will never be the same!

Become a community volunteer. All areas, from small villages to large cities, have children who need a Christ-like adult in their lives. The homeless need someone like the carpenter's Son who will care. The destitute need a Jesus follower filled with compassion. The foolish need a wise and godly counselor in whom the Proverbs come to life. Begin this life and you will discover that God has a heart for all humanity. We do well to follow him as he leads us to society's outcasts if only to grow our own walk with Jesus.

You will be amazed at what you will learn if you begin to do just one or two of these. It will set you on the path to enlarging your sense of who God is in your life. It will revitalize your walk with God. You will never want to stop learning of the Lord's goodness and his Mission to our lost world.

Bob Zomermaand is a retired pastor in the Christian Reformed Church of North America. He has been involved in the Sustaining Pastoral Excellence initiative for several years.

Classifieds

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Christian Courier is published on the second and fourth Monday of each month. Copy deadline for each issue is 9 a.m. Wednesday, 12 days prior to publication date.
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We wish to thank all applicants for their interest and effort in applying for this position. However, only candidates selected for interviews will be contacted.

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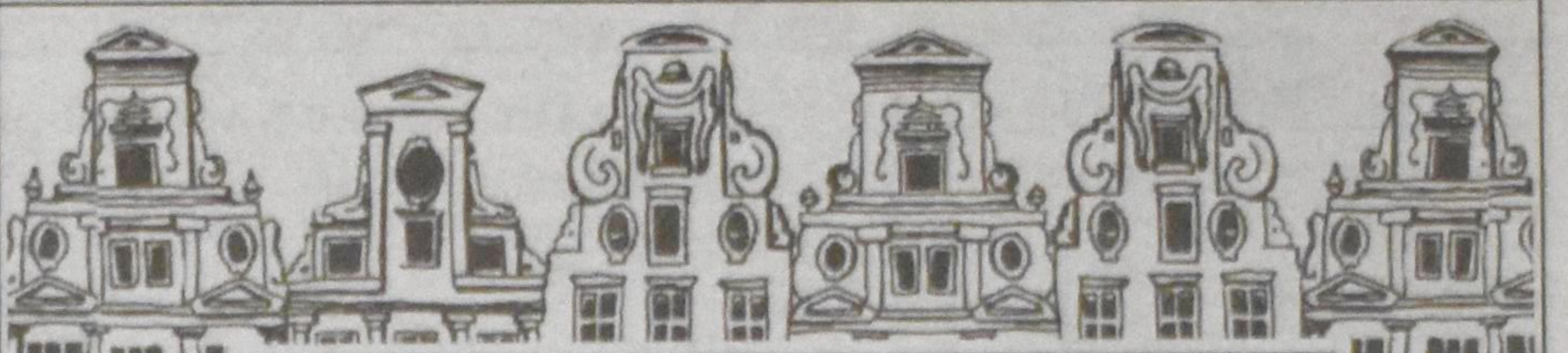

NETHERLANDS BAZAAR

Saturday OCTOBER 3rd 2009
10am – 10pm
Thornhill Community Centre
7755 Bayview Avenue, Thornhill (map on reverse)

What is the Netherlands Bazaar?
The Committee "Netherlands Bazaar" has been in existence for over fifty years. It is a non-denominational organization that works in consultation with the Netherlands Consulate, religious and community leaders, members of the medical community, Children's Aid Societies as well as social service organizations. The services of all our workers are on a volunteer basis.

Who do we help?
The Netherlands Bazaar is held once every two years. 100% of the funds raised are used to provide assistance to needy families of Dutch heritage living in Ontario, all of whom have been stricken by illness or other misfortune. Thanks to the generosity of the Bazaar supporters, we were able to distribute more than 850 food parcels over the past two years and 200 children from needy families were given the opportunity to attend summer camp. Without the support of concerned members of the community, this work could not continue.

The Committee "Netherlands Bazaar" relies on YOU to inform us when need arises in the community, just as we rely on YOUR participation in our bi-annual Bazaar.

How can you help?
Your support could take the form of a financial donation. The Committee "Netherlands Bazaar," as a registered Canadian Charitable Organization, will issue you an official receipt for income tax purposes. Your contributions of:
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Please contact us to participate!
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Events/Advertising

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Aug 29 - 30 Frisian weekend. Saturday 1 p.m. at Tillsonburg Fair Grounds. Camping available. Contact Edna 519-842-5684.

Aug 30 Fryske Tsjerketsjinst on Sunday, at 3 p.m. in the Maranatha CRC in Woodstock.Foargonger: Ds.Hellinga. Oargelist: Mr.Dykstra. *(Part of Frisian weekend)*

Aug 30 Dutch Service will be held in the **Ancaster** Christian Reformed Church at 3:00 p.m. Rev. Jacob Kuntz will be preaching.

Sep 13 60th anniversary of Maranatha Christian Reformed Church in **Woodstock**. All former pastors, associates and congregational members are invited to a celebration service at 10:00 a.m. Lunch after the service. For further information call the church @519 539 5301 or email at mcrcw@execulink.com.

Oct 3 The next Netherlands Bazaar will be held in the Thornhill Community Centre, 7755 Bayview Ave. in **Thornhill**, Ontario

Oct 3 Organ recital at 7:30 pm, Hebron CRC, **Whitby**, ON. Information: 905-424-1213. See ad this issue.

Oct 17 Diaconal ministries hosts the 'Day of Encouragement' featuring Michael Card at Redeemer College, **Ancaster**. See upcoming ads.

Oct 24 Hamilton Young Adult reunion for Young Adults of the late 70s and early 80s. Theme Find Us Faithful. Time 9:00 a.m. til 4:00 p.m. at Mountainview CRC, **Grimsby.** Visit our website http://youngadults.myevent.com for details or call Jake Ellens at 519-448-4321or email hamiltonyoungadult@yahoo.ca.

Nov 20 Christian Festival Concert at 7:30 p.m. at the Roy Thomson Hall, Toronto. Call 416-636-9779 or email landmkooy@rogers.com See Ad.

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The Lord has done great things for us and we are filled with joy.
Psalm 126: 3

In commemoration of the **60th anniversary** of
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in **Woodstock** we would like to invite former pastors, associates and congregational members to a celebration service on Sept 13, 2009 at 10:00 a.m. Please join us for fellowship and lunch after the service. For further information call the church @ 519 539 5301 or email at mcrcw@execulink.com
Website: maranathacrcwoodstock.com

Diaconal Ministries is excited to announce an upcoming concert with **Michael Card** as part of our 50th anniversary celebration at Redeemer University College in Ancaster, Ontario on Saturday **October 17**.
The **'Day of Encouragement'** begins at 9 am and features 40 excellent workshops on a variety of topics like caring with boundaries, mentoring, leadership and community ministry.
Visit our website for more information – www.diaconalministries.com

Hamilton Young Adults Reunion

If you were a Hamilton Young Adult of the late 70s and early 80s, here's your chance to get together and relive some of those youthful memories. We can pretend for a day that we're still young and tell each other that we haven't changed a bit. Of course, there'll also be room for honesty and the truth. And singing!

A Reunion based on the theme
Find Us Faithful
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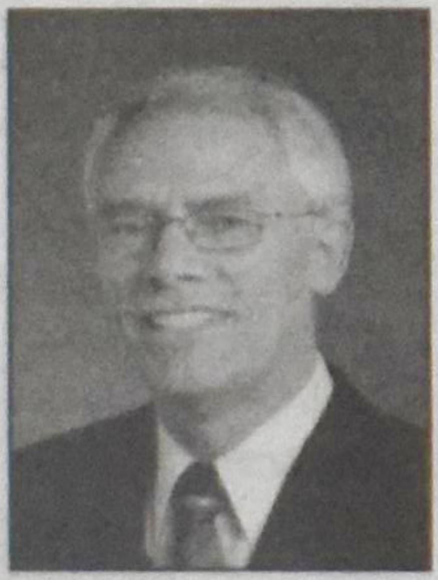

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This church has AIDS

Paul Brink

Our morning began as most of our other mornings had begun on this extraordinary trip. Up at 6:30, murmurs of greeting to my roommate, Chris Byaruhanga, and then a quick inventory of what we might need for the day: water, cameras and notebooks. We dressed perhaps a little more formally than other days – we were going to church after all – though little could be done to disguise the fact that we were visitors. Somehow professors always look like professors, even if they hail from more than half a dozen different countries in North America and Africa.

Breakfast, as always, was a lively and friendly affair; shared meals are generally good for community. A brief outline of the day was provided by Bob Evans, our team leader from Plowshares International, and in very short order we were headed for church. This Sunday it would be J. L. Zwane Memorial Presbyterian Church located in Guguletu, a poor township outside Cape Town.

This was our second week in South Africa, and by now, we were prepared to expect the unexpected. After all, post-apartheid South Africa is a country that confounds predictions and upsets expectations – often tragically, but occasionally wonderfully. But none of us were quite prepared for the particular unexpected that is J. L. Zwane Memorial Presbyterian Church.

Partly this was due to the tremendous welcome we received from the congregation. Partly this was due to the remarkable beauty of the church building, especially given the poverty of the community. But this was true especially because J. L. Zwane has AIDS.

I knew this, first, because of the big sign that said so. Even in a country where nearly 20 per cent of the adult population is HIV-positive, and where infection rates are far higher for women than men, the stigma surrounding HIV and AIDS remains pervasive. Accordingly, as is true for so many other uncomfortable realities the church must confront, the first great challenge has been to create space for ministry. Very deliberately, J. L. Zwane church has confronted head-on the prejudices and the judgments inflicted upon the victims of this global crisis. Announcing to all who enter the building and proclaiming to the Guguletu community at large that the church identifies and shares in the suffering of those with AIDS was crucial to the church's ministry and to their identity as members of Christ's church.

Priscilla takes care of twelve AIDS orphans in her small home, each one calling her "grandmother."

"Never give up"

Besides, the church really does have AIDS. No church member can remain unaffected: family members fall to the disease, or family sizes increase as new orphans arrive. Rev. Spiwo Xapile, pastor of the congregation, himself has lost five family members to AIDS. The pandemic forces congregations to deal with the reality of human suffering in ways that the North American church only dimly appreciates. Rev. Xapile's words stopped us short: "We are dying." His weekend activities support his statement: Sundays are for worship; Saturdays are for funerals.

But Rev. Xapile also made clear that despite the suffering, hope abounds at this church. Indeed, conditioned as it is by hope, perhaps it is the suffering of the church that supports both its warm welcome to strangers and its concern for beauty. Hope amid suffering also is what sustains the church's HIV/AIDS programs: support groups, counseling services, hospice care, education programs, medical care (in the church lobby after Sunday services!), and care for orphans. The work of the church in the larger Guguletu community is particularly inspiring – and challenging. We met Priscilla, an elderly grandmother who has accepted AIDS orphans, one by one, into her small home, and now is "grandmother" to twelve. J. L. Zwane church has become a crucial lifeline to Priscilla and other similar de facto social service organizations.

But perhaps the greatest sign of the solidarity of the church with the suffering has been the integration of HIV/AIDS into the very liturgy of the Sunday morning service. Corporate worship – the time when God and his people engage one another most directly – surely is at the very heart of church life. And at J. L. Zwane, the topic of HIV/AIDS is very much part of that conversation. Each Sunday, as the choir and congregation sing "Bambelela – Never Give Up," someone who is HIV-positive rises to tell his or her story of what it is to live with HIV/AIDS. Prayers are offered, difficult questions are asked, and the scarcity of answers is confronted. In the very heart of church life, the good news of the Gospel is brought against the bad news of disease.

After the service, our group was invited to lunch – mainly traditional dishes and (one more unexpected surprise) *olliebollen*. After lunch, our group reboarded the bus, but much more quietly than when we had entered – some sobered by the extent of the disease, others encouraged by the church's response to it, but none unchanged. For me, the implications of what I had experienced were extremely challenging. These Guguletu Christians are my brothers and sisters. And if J. L. Zwane Memorial Presbyterian Church have AIDS, then surely the body of Christ – of which I am also a member – has AIDS. Does my own church reflect this reality? Does yours?

Paul Brink visited South Africa this summer as a member of the Seminar in Public Theology, co-sponsored by the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities as well as Calvin College. He teaches Politics at Gordon College in Wenham, Massachusetts.

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